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THE MINISTRY OF FINE ART

THE

MINISTRY OF FINE ART

TO

THE HAPPINESS OF LIFE

ESSAYS ON VARIOUS ARTS

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BY

T. GAMBIER PARRY

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DEDICATION AND APOLOGY

To the many friends at whose desire these Essays are published I dedicate them, with an earnest apology for the too bold attempt to put into such limited forms subjects which can only be adequately treated in volumes.

They are but sketches, and pretend to be no more, on subjects which best minister to life's happiness by leading it aside to look beyond it.

T. G. P.

HIGHNAM COURT,
GLOUCESTER, *June* 1886.

ERRATA

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ESSAY I

THE PURPOSE AND PRACTICE OF FINE ART

FINE ART comes of the union of love and labour, for without love it has no sufficient motive, and without labour it can have no success. As all ideas cannot be put in words, art is in some form or other a human necessity; and in the general estimate of human happiness, the result is perhaps not to be deplored that there is no other subject that in theory and practice is treated with so much liberty. It is so easy to talk about it, and so easy and pleasant to produce a modicum of effect in it, that it is the world's favourite; as an amusement to the multitude, who care not to look below the surface of anything, and as a bright refreshment for the many who are wearied by the hardness of busy life.

So for these, and for much higher purposes than these, Fine Art may be said to have a mission in the world; at least, if by that we understand the employment of cultivated faculties, such as in eloquence, poetry, or any other combination of soul and sense by which men affect each other; and as each one's talent may be, his mission is to do that talent's work. Thus genius finds its purpose, and had best follow its own bent, whether in prose or poetry. The genius of the artist needs both, for the real and the ideal, which in their general meaning answer to them, are the body and

soul of all art; for in the broad sense of its requirements, realism is but fidelity to nature's laws, without which all would be distortion and discord, and idealism is but the play of imagination, drawing fresh notes from the great instrument of nature's music. But all the world need not be critics, and for their happiness they had better not; for the strife over the real and ideal, inflamed by the differences of taste and temper, can never be fought out till the inherent and misleading varieties of thought and sense cease to exist in human character.

Art is no light matter for those who would really master it. Its science is as needful as its poetry; for its works may be ideally conceived, but they need to be produced as things of reality to bring them within reach of comprehension. It is this compound nature that gives them all their charm and power; on their material side as things of skill, on their spiritual side as the interpreters of the intellect, the emotions, and the passions of men; and thus it is that art approaches so closely to our affections, and can become the companion of our lives. The soul of art may sound a mere poetical expression, but it is as true as the plainest prose; for just as in ourselves the life of the soul is the invisible source of all that gives value to our outward forms, so that mysterious life which glows from within the cold marble of the sculptor, or gleams from beneath the surface of the painter's art, is that without which their works are worthless, but before which we bow in acknowledgment of that soul in them which claims sympathy with our own.

A writer on Art has difficulties unknown to scientific literature. Without precision science would become a wilderness; so its language is simple, clear, and definite; but in art, of which the first element is liberty, language can only hope to express its elasticity by

adopting a pliancy suited to it. Words must often be taken on trust. If science were to demand of her sister a rigid definition of grace or beauty, and to require their comparison without confusion of terms, or the difference between power and vigour, in their artistic sense, or the definition of such qualities as freshness, purity, harmony, all which have equally and distinctly a moral as well as a material signification, the answer would, at least, not be easy. A wide margin must be allowed; and, lastly, there is the word "art" itself, a very bane of letters, with a signification wide enough to embrace every work of hand or brain, and yet so utterly inadequate as to be useless without an adjective. The art of the mechanic is the embodiment of his skill; the art of the artist is the embodiment of his ideas: but the best artist needs to be half mechanic, for though his genius is a thing of spirit, his labour is upon things of material; and as his work is to give form and consistency to what is ethereal and ideal, he needs as much the mechanic's skill as the poet's fire.

The first step in a student's life is to divest his mind of all idea that genius can dispense with labour. Art-feeling is not sentimentality nor art-practice ingenuity. A good eye and nimble fingers are great natural advantages; but let him beware of them, for they are the qualities of a talent that is painfully likely to run away with itself, and without training can only come to grief. Let him approach nature as something to love and work with, as something so deep and full as takes a life to learn. Be his disposition what it may, be the ultimate object of his study what it may, the same devotion, the same labour, the grasp of the same great principles by which his mind is trained to master what his hand is trained to do, make the one and only grammar of success for all.

The student's next step is to learn all about his

materials, and not to leave them haphazard on trust, as though such mechanical and material things were beneath his notice. He has some good examples to the contrary from men who, valuing their talents as worthy of fame, and their works worthy of durability, mastered and supervised the whole detail of their art, from the times of Apelles, who painted the portrait of Alexander the Great, with his lads all about him working up his colours, to those of Pietro Perugino surrounded by his pupils, training them to their business, in what he called not his studio but his shop. The third step is a long one from youth to age, to realise to himself the dignity of an artist's office and duty to the world ; and to cultivate a manly vigour as the tone of mind, and a pure freshness as the disposition of heart, with which he will certainly be best able to perform it. Manliness is the corrective of that sentimentality which is art's bane ; and clear and fresh is the atmosphere that invigorates an artist's life, breathing health into all his impressions, thoughts, and works. The tenderest subject, the most exalted strain of religion, the utmost refinement of poetry, are no exceptions. Morbid humour and weak sentiment mar them ; but just as a strong man's fingers touch an instrument of music with the surest delicacy, the sculptor and the painter prove the same result, that the manliest mind, in the purity of its health, as tender as it is strong, is best able to stir to anger or to melt to tears.

And this is no less the case in subjects altogether apart from any direct human interests, or any such as appeal to the emotions stirred by the incidents of daily life or history ; but in such as external nature affords to those with capacity to comprehend them, it is by the healthy strength of deeply human thought that its effects are best apprehended and illustrated. Ask the artist, ask the poet, sensible to such impressions, what it is in

his pursuits that so absorbs him, and he will reply that in all the things and circumstances of existence he traces the presence of a hidden life: that if he studies with so deep devotion the forms and features of the material world, it is so because in them he reads the great character of a language to which the depth of his own nature responds. The universe seems his own, overwhelming him by its sublimity, encouraging him by its beauty, and thus he loves to write or paint these things, that he may clothe in tangible, visible, enduring forms the deep thoughts which all these things suggested to him; and to interpret to men with less insight than himself those signs of power and beauty, wisdom and beneficence, which God's creative finger-marks have left traced and tinted, engraved and stamped on everything.

Here is a great motive which suggests the question, "What is the purpose of fine art?" *i.e.* is any purpose assignable as the basis of its existence that distinguishes it from all other subjects? The arts which compose it are totally distinct in ideal and in execution, and every artist appears to have a special purpose in every work he produces. Is there then no general purpose which binds them all together? The common broad division of subjects into science, art, and literature, indicate some clear definition; and of these, science and literature appear to tell their purpose at once and plainly, but fine art is so wide and various in its nature and its works that it does not so. Music and architecture are essentially constructive, painting and sculpture are representative: yet there is one quality that links them all, and what is that but the expression of the sense of beauty?

It is the element of beauty that characterises all fine art. Where other arts, as those of the artificer or manufacturer, infringe upon it, as many do in many

ways, it is that element of beauty that blends their outlines. The sense of beauty, and the desire to express it, is the vital spark of an artist's impulse, and it may be aroused as much by moral as by material Nature. Some motive drawn from history, religion, or the events of daily life, or from effects of external nature, may have interested his imagination, and he seizes on a subject for a picture. It is easy to perceive how the sense of physical beauty may have arrested him, and have engrossed his powers; but even where no visible beauty is present, the admiration of his moral sense has engaged him, as by the beauty of fidelity, the beauty of self-devotion, of heroism, of the elements of a great character, of noble actions, of charity, life, and truth, all of them subjects of effective illustration, even where very little of physical or material beauty appeared. An artist may be commissioned to do a work irksome to himself, and it is so because there is no form or character of beauty in it to which his sense, *i.e.* his moral or physical perception, can respond. Where his impulse is, there is beauty. The effect of beauty is to engage affection, and its power is irresistible. We love what is beautiful; we cannot love what is hideous. Devoted love blinds the eyes where beauty shines through some transcendent loveliness of character, or where a great and noble one commands that admiration which needs but one touch of nature to kindle love. It does so where no form or feature of external beauty may exist. So too it is the beauty of structure in the perfect union of great forces of nature, such as weight and equilibrium, with perfect proportion ideally and harmoniously wrought together, as in architecture, which is the beauty of power in repose. Even horror, fury, or desolation may be so intimately connected with some form or character of beauty in the artist's moral sense as to have impelled him to its

expression; such as the beauty of grief in view of ruin, the beauty of intensest sympathy with either the cause or the sufferer from the fury which agonised it, the beauty of pathos, and even of death. So in music and in sculpture, it is the rhythmic beauty of form and sounds into which the artist is impelled to clothe and to express his thoughts. In external nature, where man has not marred it, all is beautiful, in calm or storm, in fertility or in desert. So too in much of animal life, and in the exquisite cosmos of all created things. The sense of moral or physical beauty is the source of all art's motive. That beauty gained the artist's love, and his labour realised it. The purpose of all fine art is *the expression of the sense of beauty.*

But why and what is art's existence? what is the mystery that lies at the bottom of that necessity for it that all mankind has felt from the prehistoric carver of things and ornaments to the most civilised and most thoughtful of the modern world? The existence of art is at once a testimony and an appeal; the witness to and the appeal from that which by its irresistible force obliges us to recognise it as a reality, a reality irrespective of time and space, of life or death, always urgent for attention—a witness to a power beyond mortal grasp or range of sense, a power that asserts itself as commanding our respect, an appeal like a voice ever sounding in our ears, as from a living source, that we cannot refuse to listen to; its existence is a mystery, and is inexplicable, else it were no mystery; but mysteries inexplicable exist as facts, and this one of art's existence is so; and as a fact it is that man in every age and in every condition has been and is its pupil, its servant, its disciple, commanded by it, blessed by it, benefited by it, *because the voice of it, the voice of spiritual and physical beauty*, is one that he has no power to resist, for it

comes from the divine source of his own self and of all things else, and speaks, calls, appeals to him from and for a higher life than that of sense, and stirs him in the deepest depths of his being. It is that sense of divine beauty that masters him; and his art is the feeble expression of his sense of it; his acknowledgment and his worship of that which has cast across his path of mortal toil the light of its life and the shadow of its reality.

The truism that "a poet is born, not made," is often no more than the apology of indolence; but the poet must go to school, and his wings must grow by practice. If they be exceptions which other days afford, such as those of Homer and of Dante, as beings endowed with genius to create at once a language and a literature, history also records the thousand names of other men who created the philosophy, the science, and the arts of the world, whose genius was transcendent, but whose trust was only in study and self-help, as the one safe maxim of successful life. Well then may we bless the memories and follow in the steps of those grand patriarchs of modern sculpture and painting, Niccola Pisano, Orcagna, Arnolfo, Giotto, who fed the enthusiasm of their genius by lifelong study among the models and suggestions of a living, beautiful, and inexhaustible nature. Such were and so worked those men, and others like them, of undying fame. They lived to work, and they worked to live; for it is no mere flourish of vain rhetoric to say that it is the hand of industry alone that can put the crown upon the head of Genius.

One main part of an artist's study is to learn to see. Blind men always say they see, but most people have no idea how blind they are for any artistic purpose, simply because they don't know what to look for, or how to look at it. The real artist-eye is a creature of

education. It does what it is told; but there is no short and easy way of drilling it to this obedience, but only by thoughtful analysis and work. An artist learns both how to see and how not to see. A student cannot see too much for learning, but an artist can see too much for painting. In the unlimited breadth of nature an infinity of detail may exist without marring the unity of effect; but in the very limited field of art it is not so, an artist cannot be too conscientious; but art is art, and by overdoing it he may paint out all his poetry. An overloaded work of sculpture, or of painting, or of any other art, is as wearisome as an overloaded sentence.

Let us examine these statements by a few examples. What is the purpose that an artist sets before him? What is the process in the artist's mind that culminates in a work of highest character? If it be merely to reproduce the facts of what he has seen—a representative copy of some group of things or figures; why, then, the mechanism of his art and a good deal of patience will do all he wants. But can it be for some such poor purpose of commonplace as that? Is there no difference between the artist and the artisan? Is it for such bare portraiture of the outsides of things that men like these are possessed by an impulse, call it passion, call it inspiration, call it what you will, that urges them forward to express in outward character what their heart had conceived? Surely not! Some occasion of life or history, some accident of forms and colours, some poetry of action, or the equal poetry of repose, some thought, some memory of all these, heightened by association, has occupied their whole mind, and has fired their imagination. It was not the image nor idea, but the emotion which that idea aroused that urged him to expression, and brought forth his art.

It was the impulse of an emotion such as this which produced the figure of the Apollo Belvedere. The

moment of the action is supreme. The head is turned; the eyes are intently fixed. The arrow has flown; the right hand is thrown back in satisfaction, and the joy of the artist is expressed in the dignified agitation of the god.

One needs a portion of a poet's genius to understand his poetry; and to understand a work of high art, as such, one needs to appreciate the motive of the artist's inspiration. When Leonardo da Vinci undertook the commission to paint the subject of the "Last Supper," an event was presented to his mind of which no record had preserved the detail. Many artists had treated that subject before his time. Some had chosen one period of it, some another. Some, like Beato Angelico, had selected that moment when the Eucharist was instituted. The devotional habit of his mind was reflected in the character of his composition. He represented the Apostles in the attitude of kneeling, to express at once the intensity of their reverence, and his conception of the solemnity of that scene. Leonardo da Vinci chose a totally different ideal of it. His subject is that of the moment before Judas's betrayal. The scene, as he depicted it, was essentially that of the Last Supper of the Hebrew Passover, as distinguished from the Institution of the Christian Eucharist. There was no model for such a picture. Had Leonardo seen the agape in the Catacombs, their suggestions of a traditional ceremonial would have added nothing to those of the few and pregnant words of Holy Scripture. His work was to realise an ideal of his own. The vivid picture which occupied his imagination was not merely one of men's figures and attitudes, and forms and combinations of pictorial effect. His was a mental vision, entrancing him by the conception of that scene of unparalleled pathos. The artist's spirit is mute in the presence of that company; awed by the quiet dignity

and resignation of the Divine Master, and by all that power of intellectual and moral beauty that could be conceived in the countenance of One who said, and who was the actor of what He said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." The quiet majesty of that central figure is magnified by the dramatic movement of the Apostles on the right and left, each in an attitude of characteristic emotion—astonishment, remonstrance, incredulity, horror—that One so divinely holy, so perfectly lovable by all, should declare that "One of YOU shall betray me." If poetry be indeed, as it truly is, only another form of art, Fine Art, I mean, here in this wondrous wall painting we realise it to perfection. The work is great, because the depth of its poetry is great. Many others have portrayed that scene, but who has ever concentrated all its interest as in this masterpiece? Leonardo felt it with intensity, and filled to the full with the poetry of it, he laboured to realise not a mere representation of the event or record of its story, but his own ideal conception of its beauty, its religion, and its pathos.

The impulse of all high art, be the subject what it may, must operate in the same manner; for, after all, art would fail of half *its mission, which is the interchange of human sympathies*, if its works were no more than representations of matters of fact. If it be argued against this theory that no Art can transcend Nature, nor exceed the beauty of natural effect (be the subject what it may), and that this natural beauty and the utmost intensity of expression is, in that case, "matter of fact," I entirely assent to such a statement of the case, but what I urge is something beside it. It is mere waste of words to talk of allowing and insisting that Art could not surpass the facts or the beauty of Nature, and that the result would only be exaggeration

and deformity if it attempted to do so. But I venture rather to insist that Nature (in the artistic sense of the word, distinct from all scientific associations)—Nature is in the soul of men quite as truly and powerfully as in the things and appearances of the external world. The nature of the world *within* and that of the world *around* the artist is the same—Beauty is an abstract quality, utterly mysterious, attributed on one side to the actions and appearances of things, but assigned on the other side, with equal or greater force, to the ideal of their moral qualities and associations. For just as it is a scientific fact that the phenomenon of noise would not exist if ears had not been created, though all the heavens crashed with thunder, so it is that all the variety of natural forms which now charm our eyes—those colours, proportions, and effects which arrest and delight us—would be as though they were not, but for the capacity of the mind to comprehend them as symbols of grace or grandeur. Their forms and colours are for themselves mere necessities of growth, and the effect of their chemistry and light. Their movements are the results of pressure of air, water, or their own weight. They are in themselves items of creation, with variety of purpose and value in the economy of Nature. They present figures to the eyes of beasts, and by their size, shape, and colour, they are distinguished as poisonous or good for food; the secluded lake attracts the heron for its fish; the colour and the scent of the rose attract the insects for its honey. But bring them within reach of that power of moral perception which is within us, that inward vision by which those figures are received on the retina of our mind, and then all their character is changed; their forms become types of moral qualities, such as power or grace; their variety, their colours, their very existence, become a joy till then unknown; their natural history is changed to poetry; their growth,

their movements, and all the living things around them, the morning and the evening, become illumined by that morall ight which beams back upon them, reflected from within ourselves. All Nature is seen, suffused at once with the charm with which our moral insight perceives it to be clothed. The moral of beauty is a conception of the soul, interpreting the address of Nature.

These thoughts were suggested by the consideration of what was the process within the artist's mind by which great works of art were produced.

Fine art, though in one sense it is a work of skill, is, in the other (and the only sense that makes it precious to the world), the mirror of the artist's mind. Thus it has often happened that some subject unnoticed by common eyes, or some sudden revival of memory, has struck a chord in the music of an artist's poetry; and at once he grasps its transitory beauty, he throws upon it the whole energy of his art, he rescues the vision for life, and stamps it, in perpetuity, with the beauty and the interest that he saw and felt in it, for the joy of men.

It was thus that the scene of an old hulk, disfigured by work and war, worn out and useless, fit only to be broken up for firewood or old iron, struck upon the imagination of our great landscape painter Turner. What might it not have been in other hands than his? Probably the form of any old ship, battered into picturesqueness by force of age, and indebted to the work of weather and sea-water for the broken colours of its timbers, its rusty iron and green corroded copper, might have made a fair subject for a picture, even by the most prosy copyist of the facts before him.

Not so Turner—that devoted student, that exquisite copier of Nature, as he was, who delighted the world, not as the mere chronicler of Nature's facts, but, by bringing Nature's life to Nature's surface, he drew out

all her latent beauty, he seized it by his skilful art, and gave it permanence. His pictures are not the mere portraits of things, but expressions of the way he loved to think about them. He presented to the world pictures of well-known scenes and circumstances, not as either he himself or as any one else, perhaps, ever saw them. He, as the accomplished student of Nature, knew what they might appear under some *phase of natural effect most suited to them;* and thus, as an artist, he knew what they ought to be, with all their features and their character true to Nature, but with all the prose of their commonplace transformed to poetry.

Thus, in the illustration I have chosen, the old disfigured hulk, being dragged away to be broken up into the ugly rubbish of a marine storedealer, became, through the magic of his conception of it, that perfect poem upon canvas, the old ship (the *Téméraire*) towed away to her last home. The deep glow of an autumnal and shrouded sunset, reflected in the still waters of the harbour, gives the tone and key to the whole scene. About the centre of the picture lies the old ship, with all the disfigurements of the battle and the storm veiled from sight by the mellow twilight. It is drawn forward slowly and heavily by a small steamboat, with rolling smoke and gurgling wreaths of steam, and, by their contrast to the intense quietude around, making the silent procession of that old hero's funeral only still more solemn. Such was Turner's conception of the scene. A hero's epitaph written in colours.

You may remember that just now I said that one phase in the art of seeing Nature was to train the eyes *what not to see.* For that purpose I have drawn your attention to two works of totally different character; each, regarded as the work of human skill employed for the expression of human feeling, perfect. And if you

analysed the composition of those great works, you would find that their power of expression depended as much on the artifice of omission as on what was represented; just as in the drama, where the author produces a climax of effect by skilful omission, leaving the last deed of tragedy to the excited imagination of the audience. The principle is the same in sculpture as in painting. It is simply the avoidance of all that would disquiet the design, or contribute nothing to its expression. The qualities of repose and dignity, which are among the greatest characteristics of the greatest art of all times, are mainly obtained by the artifice of selection and omission. Its extreme use is shown in the Assyrian and Egyptian sculptures. The extreme opposite is only too apparent at all periods of depraved and fallen arts, where ornament attempts to mask the absence of idea.

In no case in modern art (meaning by that all that is not classical or mediæval) is this great principle of artistic effect more completely illustrated than in the figure of Lorenzo dei Medici by Michael Angelo in the Medicean Chapel at Florence. The design is the embodiment of one great conception. Not one scrap of detail embarrasses the sight. The great sculptor knew well what to avoid as well as what to accentuate for the expression of his idea. There is no intrusion there upon the solemnity of that awful figure. That statue is the perfect ideal of a troubled mind, occupied in the silent horror of its thoughts.

I hope that I am not fatiguing you with too many illustrations. You will find, the deeper you pursue your study, that the perfected skill of the trained eye and hand in the employment of this apparently simple artifice is the last attainment of the greatest artist, and the secret of the breadth and power of his works. In this too lies the secret charm of all good conventional art. We may notice it in many ways. For instance,

it explains the peculiar beauty which the very imperfect works of early and mediæval art possess. But any one who failed to read the undercurrent of their poetry (which he would, if he had none in himself), would be likely to condemn them by a criticism which has much truth on the surface of it. He would say that the omissions in them were not the meritorious omissions of good work, but the omissions of ignorance, producing blemishes and deformities. But these works, with all their evident defects, are a mine of religious poetry, and all their excellence is in the expression of it. Suppose it to be a group of figures on panel, on glass, or in mosaic. The group is that of a mother, a child, a bird, a wreath, a crown, a golden halo: but the features are incorrectly drawn, not a finger has a knuckle, the perspective is wrong, the draperies are false; but who cares? Why criticise that which makes no pretension? What critic worthy of his name would look for what was not known to Art at the time the work was executed? No; look rather for what does pretend to be there; a holy family; a mother wrapt in contemplation of her own Child: that Child's majesty indicated by the crown it wears, its divinity by the aureole, its innocence and tenderness by its simple attitude. Let the technical defects be allowed, and let the generosity of educated criticism pass them over, but see beneath the poor surface of that frail art the earnest genius of the artist, and the fervent devotion of his religious poetry; such as all the training of modern art would fail to approach, *unless*, indeed, the *same spirit* were there to guide the more educated hand.

The greatest scope for the exhibition of these great principles is where the arts of sculpture and painting combine with architecture, that great art which embraces all others within herself. So true is this, that the safest advice to a young architectural student is to let

all specialities of architecture wait till he has mastered the great principles which underlie all art—composition, design, contrast, the construction and meaning of ornament, the use and power of colour, shadow, mass, and the treatment of detail. All these must first be known, for architecture is no mere thing of capitals and columns, groined roofs or sculptured cornices; but, in a word, it is the focus of all mechanical and artistic knowledge, science, and genius, brought together by one grasp of comprehensive intelligence. All its styles, technicality, and mathematics, can be learnt by rote—but a great architect must be first an artist.

Those works which ultimately affect us the most powerfully are those which suggest rather than define, and leave our thoughts room to expand. Architecture has a special power to effect this, for its character is essentially abstract. Breadth of effect is as much the excellence of one art as of another; and just as it is that none but a great architect dares to build an expanse of bare wall (for he knows well the power of its effect when used rightly), so the great artist painter will afford, in all his works, areas of quietude, that our eyes may wander about or rest at will, and thus come fresh upon his points of interest and emphasis, charmed by the alternation of action and repose. Treated by this plain artifice, the commonest things may become objects of interest and beauty. What, for instance, could be less attractive under ordinary effects than a Cambridgeshire fen or a Dutch plain? And yet what can be more charmingly poetical than some landscapes by such men as Cuyp or Both, with their simple composition of a subject where all the incidents are perhaps little more than a willow-tree and a cow or two? But the air is so pure and full of light, the villages clustering round their church steeples on the horizon lie so quiet in the happy rest of evening, the contrast

of the rounded forms of summer clouds with the level lines of the landscape, and the long cool shadows of the setting sun, make a lovely poem out of nothing. Our interest demands no more, and our eyes can feast on it in charmed repose.

But I need trouble you with no more examples. I have spoken of students, but the greatest artist has ever been the keenest student to his dying day. Nature has been to him his unfailing resource and relief, and is to him as the very food of his life; his heart and mind are occupied in the contemplative study of it; he sees, he feels, he marvels at its beauty; he asks what is this power that so entrances him? Here are qualities, properties of external nature totally distinct from any action of the physical phenomena about him: forms and colours are physical necessities; but it is by no means with them alone that he is concerned; it is that extraneous quality belonging to them, beauty, physically useless and materially unaccountable, that occupies his whole mind. Here is a power as universal as material existence, but utterly free and independent of its laws. How is it then that we, if we be but creatures of material, can be affected by it? By what capacity, by what faculty of our nature do we perceive it, know it, love it, and by its irresistible influence we love all things that possess it? Here is a power in weak, perishable, insensate things, which is itself imperishable. If beauty be not a hallucination, it must of necessity be accepted as a fact. Call it a quality of things, call it a phenomenon, call it an attribute, but it remains a fact; and all the more marvellous as a property of material things, and yet possessing no phenomena in common with them. It is a power without force, a reality without measure of its existence.

By all the experience, by all the evidence of the

moral and physical world, beauty is a thing of life. In ourselves the very recognition of beauty is an earnest of immortality. Our moral sense of it is in unison with our physical sense. We measure things by its formula, because all that is good appears beautiful, and evil is but a negation, the moral deformity of what once was good.

The measure of the human soul can be taken only by the measure of its moral faculties. In the contemplation of beauty, and in the cultivation of our knowledge of it, we are feeding the highest faculties of our nature. In that image the human soul recognises some elements of its own nature. The height of its aspirations offer to it a criterion for its estimate of itself, and it possesses through that element of beauty a communion with all nature, deep and intimate as by no other means is possible.

The source of art's immortal fire is in the hearts of men; and the beauty of external nature is the symbol of that Divine light which illuminates both it and them. It is not the poetry of the artist that clothes Nature with those Divine attributes but by that precious gift implanted in him, he sees them as others cannot, and so reflects them from his own mind as to make them at once comprehensible to others and their delight. Indeed, one of the most precious duties that fine art can perform is so to present Nature to men's eyes as to make them love that Nature more. Nature is the embodiment of the thoughts of God: and Fine Art is the embodiment of the thoughts of men, to which that Nature has afforded the motive and expression—a treasury of things and thoughts most precious to human life, as inexhaustible by the hopeful enthusiasm of youth, as by the meditative memory of age.

Such is the character of art's best ministry to the intellectual health and happiness of life. Imagination

and those emotions that art expresses may act and react on each other, as the impulse of character directs them; but let an artist remember that the value of his skill is not merely in the writing of his own thoughts well, but in teaching others to read them. Incomprehensible art is only so much rubbish, and selfish and sensual art is only worthy of the flames. Under an impulse, well-nigh irresistible, an artist's mind is carried onward as by a passion, without thought of self or others; but the heart of the man for light or darkness, sympathy or selfishness, good or evil, underlies it all, and is its own unconscious witness to the world of the real worth of all he does. Earnestness, ability, and skill are, of course, the elements of all success; and with these the noblest heart will always do the noblest work, to dignify the aims of life, to fill its waste places with strength, and to satisfy its best desires. There is thus a fire that burns within a man's breast, kindling heart, mind, and imagination, raising memory to idea, and inspiring material with life: but the man is stopped in his upward career by the barriers of his earthly state; he battles with the irksomeness of his mortal bonds; he knows that his work is but a flash from the light which shines within him; that his weak hands can never reach, nor can their poor tools realise the full greatness of his burning thoughts. He bows, obeys, and works. What can he more?

The highest and the purest art is that which is fed at the fountain of *healthy* imagination, for the food of *that* is Truth.

ESSAY II

THE MINISTRY OF FINE ART TO COMMON LIFE

FINE art cannot make but ministers to life's happiness by contributing to the elements of its enjoyment, spreading its works freely before the world for acceptance or rejection, and leaving the pleasure and the profit of them dependent on the capacities it approaches and the sympathies it meets. Without them its work and office is but a blank. Without capacity to appreciate or sympathy to endear them, its loveliest works are as worthless as food is to sight or music to the sense of smell; and all its offers and appeals fall profitless, as sunshine on the desert or eloquence on the ears of the dead. Art may contribute to the luxury of life, but luxury does not make life's happiness. Art's delight is in the individual mind that opens to it; and its contribution to the brightness of public life is its result on many minds, affording that sense of pleasure and contentment that the multitude receives, acknowledging the enjoyment without caring to comprehend. It needs no knowledge of how such pleasure comes; but, as freely as it breathes the air, that multitude enjoys and loves the arts that cheer its homes and embellish its cities, where the lust of the eye is not a sin, nor the pride of life other than a patriotic virtue.

There is a closer relationship between prose and

poetry, romance and reality, in the course of common life about us than many, who are deeply versed in the dry business of it, care to take account of. But if the incidents were brought to light, and the tales were told of all the suffering and heroism, the misfortunes, the infirmities, and the struggles of humanity that, with all their lights and shadows of noble virtue and uncommunicable sadness, compose the real pictures of those social states about which statistics are registered and philosophic schemes are formed, the volumes would read like romances, and the records would be subjects more fit for poets and artists than for the statist or the politician.

In the cold, mechanical routine of life that necessity may have forced upon them, our people need heart-relief as much as rest of head and muscle. They have souls to satisfy and sympathies that crave response; and to many such as they art offers, as naught else can with equal ease, the resources of cheering and congenial enjoyment. In whatever way it be regarded, whether for its practice or its pleasure, its poetry or its prose, as an object of pursuit or an element of education, it would be hard to find, unless in the equally wide and fascinating interest of natural sciences, aught else that opens the way to so many issues of healthy pleasure or of solid benefit. But it pretends to no panacea for all the ills of life. A power it is, but one which rather follows than leads; for its forces depend on what they find to act upon, and the wills and ways that are open to them. There is indeed a power greater than it, and art can be its effective servant to tell through faithful eyes the truths that ears are often dull to. But there is another power also greater than it that loves to deck out evil in the garb of beauty, and would pervert its course from purity to shame; such heights does it open to those who will to rise, such depths to those who choose to fall.

It needs no artist's eye or sentiment to perceive how greatly life is affected by the aspects of things around it. Climate and race may decide the national lines and features of it, but its accidents and aspects are the influences that sway its tone and temper, to brighten or depress, to exalt or barbarise.

Our national arts had flourished once, but they were wrecked some centuries ago. Since then the demand for any sort of art at all, for many long years, came only from the wealthy few, and mainly for their vanity's sake. The things that surrounded the daily life of our people gradually lost all that had given a colour of blitheness or artistic sense to it. The national character, which had been reflected in the aspect of all around them, and had been the secret of all the charm in the incidents of public and private life, had gradually disappeared. Things had once been lovable for their national individuality. The old narrow street, with all its interest of home endearment, with its pleasant outline of overhanging roofs and gables, quaint dormers, turrets, and spires of shining shingle—carved woodwork and painted panelling, and all the cheery sense of friendship, warmth, and comfort that they gave—the deep chimney corner, the pleasant open porch, with their associations of rest, of refreshment, of warm-hearted hospitality—and all else that could nourish in our people the last and least sense of the poetry of common life, gave way before the desolating hand of social and political change. National taste and feeling became a blank. A foreign form of art in its repulsive character of bleak unsuggestiveness came into vogue. Stiffness and meanness took the place of the old-fashioned pleasantness and elasticity, and all forms of art endeared by national sympathy died away. So had all great and good art everywhere, and what remained was forced, unnatural, and frivolous. All

over civilised Europe no art but that of lowest type was presented to the people, and in our own country so deep had been the fall of public feeling, that contempt for art was regarded as a virtue akin to manliness. But the craving for beauty is irrepressible. It may be for awhile kept still by inevitable events of national or individual life; it may be poisoned by calamity, misdirected by vice, chilled by oppression, and dormant for the very want of all healthy food: but the hunger for it is a part of our nature, because beauty is a natural element of life, and is inseparable from it. It was from the very weariness of the national and individual heart for want of things beautiful that the cry arose that awoke the dormant spirit of the arts.

If in one more than in another, it has been rather in town than in country life that their aid has been most needed and their benefit most evident. Country life brings with itself its own opportunities of refreshment in pure Nature's beauty spread lavishly around it, with its varying phases that change with every mood of mind, as though the very air were inhabited by some sympathising spirit that received and responded to all that humanity might feel or tell; but town life, especially for such as necessity binds closely within it, has no such ever-present restoratives. Some change of interest or occupation is their main resource, but rarely such as to relieve them from themselves; and the aspect of life about them is heavy with fatigue. Wide and delightful opportunities are opened to them by the pursuits of literature and science, though not without exertion; but the pleasure and profit that pure art brings to such as they are—too often worn with toil or jaded with artificiality—are like the balmy fragrance of a mountain breeze, or such light and refreshment to weary minds as a spring morning spreads upon

the weary world, when all things seem bright and blithe, as though winter were gone for ever.

Art is serious work indeed, as those know well who know it best; but art must have its holiday, and no phase of it, however light it be, is to be despised if it do but keep its self-respect. The very object of it all is happiness; so no art worthy of its name is despicable. What is despicable comes not of the effusion of hearty feeling—as the grotesque often does, and good caricature does always—but of vicious affectation.

Beside those grander forms of art which represent the scenes of history and religion, and are precious for the fame of noble deeds and national honour, there are many less serious modes of interest and expression that throw sunshine over life. Among them the art of landscape is like a perpetual holiday. Fresh and free, with emotions of vague pleasure, far from the cares of life or thoughts of trouble and fatigue, it borrows the poetry of Nature's transient charms, that come like a breath and vanish like a ray, but staying their flight and making them a lasting joy.

It seems strange that landscape painting should have so long delayed its development as to have reached its maturity only in modern times; for if there be any form of art that is universal in its relation to human feeling, it is that of landscape—an art which addresses itself not merely to those who have the poetic sense to perceive the moral of its beauty, but to the homeliest sentiments and commonest interests of daily life. It was the universal recurrence to Nature for the power of its illustration and the tenderest touches of its sentiment that, from earliest times, endeared poetry to mankind; and yet the representative arts paid no regard to it but for the general purpose of a background, nor to its features but for their symbolism, as emblems of personal or moral attributes. These were the notes only, with

here and there a phrase, but not the full chorus of Nature's universal hymn: its figures were idealised; its powers were deified, but the power of its beauty was not comprehended, nor the depths of Nature's nature touched by it. It needed a new ideal of thought and aspiration to train the faculties so to perceive the elements of poetry in the effects of the external world, and so to embrace the union of its moral and material beauty as to translate its impressions into the language of art. Music, the latest of the arts to attain its highest development in our own time, has an intimate relationship with this art of landscape in the sources of its inspiration, and even in some cases a greater power than it in portraying the surrounding scenery of life. Human passion does not exhaust the range of musical expression as it breaks out in the power and loveliness of song, but the whole poetry of Nature is open to it. Music can pursue the storm, and follow the passing hours, the changing aspects of earth, sea, and sky, of day and night; and, with profounder sympathy than any other art, music can bring within the range of sense the echo of those whispers that, from the depths of Nature's mystery, arrest and overwhelm the soul; while landscape art, though its range seems infinite, and its charms as inexhaustible as Nature, can do no more than seize upon some transient effect, the action or the sentiment of one passing scene, and perpetuate only the beauty of a moment.

But there is another sphere of art the very opposite of this, wilful and artificial indeed, but most pleasant, that must not be omitted among the many forms of it that contribute to life's happiness; for if art is to be entertained as a means to that beneficent result, the wider range, within reason and respect, that we can give it, the more approaches will be open to the many varying capacities of mind it has to reach. Lyric art

has always had its place, and ought to have it still. Lyric painting, no less than lyric poetry and music, is lovely; lyric sculpture is the very embodiment of grace and happiness; and even lyric architecture is possible, not merely in those studied forms of which the choragic monument of Lysicrates in ancient classic, or the façade of the Ca d'Oro at Venice in mediæval domestic, or the chapel of Rosslyn in northern Gothic, may suggest ideas, but in its lighter and more wayward forms among the pleasant and graceful buildings that mingle with the sylvan scenery of our parks and gardens, and add by their brightness to the charm of the picturesque. If sometimes the strains of lyric art need apology, they have it in their playfulness; but to avoid offence such play needs to be like that of Leonardo da Vinci's caricatures, that, in all their exuberance of whim, never transgressed anatomy. It is a possible but confessedly a dangerous experiment, for there are borders and precipices in art as in nature and in morals; but it is possible to approach the brink without falling over. Within these limits then let lyric art have free play for all the poetry of its gay inventiveness; for, so long as the freshness of wit and whim breaks out in genial happiness from the human heart, it would be but morbid temper and sour criticism to mar the passing joy. Let the world be free and happy; only, when it plays with art, let it play within the bounds of natural enthusiasm and self-respect. Transgress that limit, and all beyond it is but a wilderness of offensive, unreal, untrue, and vulgar vanity.

But it needs no wandering into the byways of the arts to afford brightness to common life. In the busy struggle of our English life it has been a blessing to have found such resource of real pleasure and benefit to our people as the arts afford.

Even if our experience or witness of actual life be

insufficient, it needs but little stretch of imagination to picture to ourselves realities which, in every class of our social state, are hidden from the outside world by the tender care, the refinement, the self-sacrifice of those who labour on, though irksomely, for others from whom, through age and trouble, all hope and resource has been cut off. Many are they, to whom Nature has denied strength for severer work, who thus occupy themselves in the simpler spheres of art—persons of whom the world might well be proud if it did but know them: angelic lives in dreary homes; a living smile where all else is sad.

But art's highest sphere is one of intellectual interest and attainment, apart from all private or individual value—the sphere of national service, by which the cultivation of a whole people is affected; and, whether observed or unobserved by themselves, their interests and pursuits, their labour and their recreation are supplied and enlightened by it.

But we have a very mixed multitude to deal with. There are classes among our fellow-men over whom shadows seem to have settled impenetrably, and the dulness of their dreary homes has driven them to drown their weariness in vice. It would be a worthy work to open the eyes of such as they are to their own relief, and to show them how close it is within their reach. We believe that by the narrow wedge of counter-attractions we may introduce elements of interest and occupation that will raise the tone and purify the motives and habits of our people, and shaming them away from evil, may induce some brighter thought and hopefulness of life to disperse its shadows.

I passed two cottages, and, by the aspect of their windows side by side, the thought was forced on me how strong must be the contrast in character and life of those within them. One window was bright with its

pots of simple flowers, and, like the door beside it, it was shaded by wreaths of clustering rose and honeysuckle. The other was broken, dirty, and neglected, with a tattered rag hung up within to hide all behind it. I ventured to enter them. One family met me with a smile, the other with a frown. Not long after I learnt that a child from that forlorn abode brought home a simple prize from school; it was a coloured print. Her mother pinned it to the dirty wall, and the cobwebs were brushed away. Its bright colours and clean border seemed a pleasure, and made the disorder and raggedness around it painful. The child had felt the happiness of encouragement. Next year another bright-looking prize was added to the stock. Some pride then touched the heart of the family. Those small treasures became precious to them as things of beauty. Insensibly other little ornaments accumulated, and the other walls were cleaned to receive them. The seed was sown, and the infection spread. After a while the whole cottage became orderly as it never used to be. The garden, once but a wilderness, was tended, and flowers were in the windows, and, as time wore on, a bright and cheery gleam seemed to shine where all before had been sad and shadowy. Another year I passed those cottages again, no more contrasted as in former days; both bright and clean and cheery; and, entering them, I was met with frowns no more.

It was no development of artistic sense in that family that turned their wretched home into a comparative paradise. It was the gradual influence of *educating beauty* falling on ground capable of receiving it; and that influence, the educating influence of *experience*, must be the basis of all that we can hope to do, to undermine the degradation and disgrace around us, and by the narrow edge of better things to introduce with patience the materials of a higher and a happier life.

Of all the vices which pollute the source and thwart the progress of fine art, the striving after novelty is among the worst. No one versed in his art could be guilty of it. But it is no uncommon thing to hear complaints of the trammels of old principles; and arguments are warm and numerous that it is but a miserable slavery to be tied down to follow in the steps of generations whom we have altogether surpassed in civilisation and intelligence; that our ideas and habits of life are different; that we are capable of striking out new principles; and that art, like other things, must be changed to meet them. They say that people are wearied with the everlasting sameness, that art used on its old system is used up; but that it is infinite in its capabilities, that a new standpoint is possible, and then, all trammels being removed, fresh ideas, fresh principles, fresh effects would rise—fresh, beautiful, and complete as Minerva from the head of Jove, or Aphrodite from the foam of the sea. But, in truth, art is no more than the representative of human thoughts and feelings, and it is they that must first be changed.

Originality is a precious, but a perilous talent, with a good and a bad side to it, like many other worse and better things, the best being that which is ignorant of its own existence. Original ideas are not got by looking for them. The most true and precious originality is that which venerates the humanity from which it sprang, and loves the old things and ways that generations of human hearts and poetry have consecrated, and then, with warmth and brilliancy all its own, breaks forth with beauty born afresh, and age transformed into the bloom of youth.

But it needs the touch of supreme refinement to play with novelty. All that we poor mortals can do by mental labour is but little otherwise than that which is the sum total of the labour of our hands—the moving

of old things into new places. The course of human genius is like that of a river; at one time sleeping in the quietude of deep pools, losing all identity with the running stream, and reflecting all things from its lucid surface; at another time impulsive, rapid, and irresistible. Originality may turn the old river into a new channel, but it is only the channel that is new. The genius most precious to mankind is continuous: if not in itself, at least in the vitality it imparts to others, as trees which seed themselves and yet are always different. Originality that is sudden and spasmodic fascinates, but is of little use. Our poet-artist Blake was the master of it. He wrote and drew with marvellous genius, but I doubt whether any one has or would care to follow in his steps. Nature allows no break. The river's meandering course is the solution of all our riddle; and though enthusiasm may disturb, and aspiring youth may fret, Nature, whether that around us or that within us, will ever guide the ceaseless stream.

If any nation ever had to begin its arts again, it was England nearly a century ago. A few great names, like Wren and Inigo Jones, Hogarth, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Flaxman, Wedgewood, and some others, seemed to stand out like tops of mountains above the mist. Such names cast a halo of glory on their age, but the public was but half alive to it. If, a few hundred years ago, the fanatics and panoclasts of the country had been instructed to smash everything that was hideous, instead of destroying everything refined and beautiful that the care and intellect of ages had produced, we should still have in England models of national arts to our incalculable advantage. In spite of that, however, art began again in earnest; but with it sprang up a new difficulty, not by the want but by the plethora of models, making the education of public taste all but hopeless. The confusion of all the styles

of art of the habitable world, ancient and modern, was cast before it like a flood, and public taste broke down, like an overworked linguist, under the multitude of his languages, jumbling his words and idioms into nonsense. But experience will cure all this.

The poetry of art is no mere transient sentiment, except to minds incapable of no more; nor is the artist's study of sounds, forms, and colours mere superficial dealing with Nature's accidents. They are to him realities for which he acknowledges responsibility. For the purpose of his art, and of all that is to result from it, he cannot know too much nor feel too deeply; for feeling without knowledge can produce no science, and knowledge without feeling can produce no art. With him the real and the ideal are in close contact. His work is to make ideal things realities and realities ideal. There is a perpetual movement within his mind between the material and spiritual world. Sounds, forms, and colours are not things the musician, the sculptor, or the painter cares to rest on but for the expression of his thoughts. The poet, the musician, the artist are all one in relation to the world of things and of their fellow-men. The whole realm of nature is theirs—but not for themselves. It is a large patrimony to inherit; and it is the free possession of all who have sense and power to perceive and appreciate it—a noble inheritance, without dispute of title, equally for the humble and the noble, the rich and the poor; the home of that beneficent power that ministers to the happiness of their life. Nature has been art's nursery, art's school, art's workshop, art's council chamber. Infirmity may dull its sight and bar its upward course, but the goal to which Nature points its way is a lofty one—a pure ideal where the human and divine life meet.

The perception of beauty is one of the most pre-

cious endowments with which God has blessed humanity. The wise and benevolent do well to foster it in their fellow-men; and we do well to bless God for the inestimable gift, so far as we possess it ourselves, accepting the ministry of art as the surest means for its cultivation to enlighten and refresh the world, and accepting, in relation to it, the fundamental testimony of Nature, that God has spread man's path with beauty because He has consigned his life to work.

ESSAY III

THE MINISTRY OF FINE ART TO SPIRITUAL LIFE

OF all the services that Fine Art has rendered to mankind the most valuable is that by which it has evoked and cultivated the spirit-born faculty of the imagination. It has done so by the power of that element in Nature that we know as beauty, an element that pervades the universe, exhibiting itself both morally and materially, not merely in the outward guise of things, but in the whole order of their being. Beauty is a reality most evident and most mysterious, of which science may explain the intermediary action, but cannot touch either its beginning or its end; but which the human soul, looking both farther back and farther forward, perceives as an element of divine life, and through it is conscious of the silent witness of Himself, by the Creator, to the spiritual comprehension of His creatures.

But as Nature is art's prototype and the source from which all external effects of beauty are derived, one might have inclined to attribute to it all the power requisite for this beneficent influence; but it is not so. The effects of external Nature upon many minds is too direct; they receive from them no more than immediate and ordinary impressions; and in many cases the circumstances of life and their own dispositions disqualify them for any refined perception. Nature may seem beautiful to them and pleasant, but only

so as an affair of daily occurrence, and too familiar to arouse any special feeling. It is possible on the contrary for the effect of art upon such minds to be very different, for art is Nature with humanity superadded, and thus bringing with it the human idea of Nature's beauty, it helps them by the power of an unconscious sympathy to perceive what otherwise would have passed unheeded.

But like many other things fine art is a power for evil as well as good, and its attractiveness makes that power great. For evil, we find it in works of vanity and vice; for good, we see it in the fire which shines from beneath the surface of good men's works. Will and genius are the sources of its power, and thus a work of marble or of colours becomes a thing of purpose and of life; and a more true and clear exponent than language of men's nature and men's thoughts, for language may hide and pervert truth, but art would convict itself of the lie it would try to tell.

The impulse of art comes the artist knows not whence. An irresistible and untraceable ideal haunts him; its imagery falls on him like a reflection from another state of being; the mystery of it engages him, the beauty of it fascinates him; its power increases in his search to realise it; his heart and mind are oppressed at the sense of it, and the expression of it by his art alone affords the means of their relief. A work of art comes forth because it must.

The first rude sculptor may well have started back, agitated before the embodiment of his soul's conception. Whence that conception? Forms of an unsought imagery had passed before him. The breath of a strange influence had impinged upon his thought as mysteriously as the light air wafts across his forehead. Whence came it and whither it went he knew not; but now it stands before him a reality, startling in its

reality, an embodied shadow, an emanation from his own life, a film of thought that had flashed out from the unknown, and was the next moment lost, like a fragrance from the earth or the gloss upon the dew, but caught up, recovered, reproduced by his rude skill. Whence was the birth of that first image? Was it in an agony of grief or terror, or throb of conscience, or in emotion aroused by the sublime effects of Nature's awful grandeur, that an ideal of unearthly majesty had struck and stamped itself on his imagination? He looked blindly into infinity, conscious of a light he could not see, and the reality of the unseen had forced upon him the idea of Deity. He felt the divine element in life, he felt the divine life in things,—he fashioned the symbols of them, he realised their forms, his own impassioned life transfused them, and the people called them Gods.

As with that primitive sculptor, so art, in all time, has been and is the creature and the producer of emotion; and most natural therefore is it that the subject which produces the deepest emotions produces the greatest art. The impulses of poetry, simplest or most sublime, and the emotions of religion are its congenial elements. Its strength is in their strength. The eloquence of literature and of speech may have more power to repel, but attraction is art's own prerogative. Wickedness and horror may be pictured in vain, but by appeals to the heart and conscience through what is lovely, pure, and true, it wins every cause it pleads. Illustrations of agony, vice, and shame are themselves as repulsive as the evils they wish to cure. It is hard to believe that Hogarth's pictures of the Rake's progress ever stopped the course of vice, or that Morland's illustrations of the fall and ruin of Letitia ever stayed the folly of a frivolous girl. But there can be no doubt of art's power to clench a conviction once received, from whatever source

derived, or to add force equally to superstition or to truth; for the arts of all times have illustrated this, from the idol and fetich of the savage, which was but the embodiment of the demon of his dread, to the perfected arts of both Pagan and Christian civilisation.

The embodiment of the religious ideal, and deeper far than that, the *Impersonation* of that ideal, has been, through all ages, a longing desire of mankind, approaching a necessity. The irresistible conviction of spiritual existence, the idea of the power and beauty of invisible things, has so possessed the minds and imaginations of men, that the whole material universe has been peopled with them, from the gods and goddesses who reigned in the starry heavens, to those bright and graceful beings with which mythology has filled the woods and fountains, the rocks, the ocean, and the very air itself. Impersonation of deity in human form was the highest ideal on which the Pagan arts had been perfected. Those arts had swayed the emotions of men; but yet, with all their beauty and with all their power, an impenetrable shadow hung over them. There was a sadness in their joy; satisfaction was incomplete. The impersonation was inanimate. The story of Pygmalion was but the common dream of men; they felt after divine life, and longed for it with a certainty of its reality and truth of which their unaided senses were incapable. Human sense had vainly grasped at what the human spirit had yearned to see; but only the material of an inanimate symbol was all that art could give in reply. Neither intellect nor sense were satisfied. The heart, the mainspring of humanity, was not relieved. A great ideal in philosophy, in literature, and in art had for ages occupied the mind and imagination of mankind. But whence its power if it were but a thing of fancy or a dream? The whole fabric of it would have long since perished but for the uncon-

querable conviction of its inward truth. That conviction was the forecast of a great reality. From remotest antiquity all art had strained its eyes to that subject of mankind's unconscious prophecy. The loftiest music of all poetry had raised its voice to it. What the hearts of all nations had longed for was the Impersonation of Life; and at length, and in the fulness of time, that Life was manifested; that Life was the light of men, and the heart of humanity was satisfied.

The Christian artist is like the sower who went forth to sow: and art is truly a divine seed, whose fruit is for the sweetness of man's life, and with it he need not sow in tears to reap in joy. Art has many functions in the world, for use, for livelihood, for enlightenment, for honour; but the artist's highest commission is to teach the world, through the evidence of the universe, in the mystery of beauty, the provision of the Creator for the happiness of His creatures. The divine attributes of power and infinity might overwhelm the world with fear, but the attribute of love reassures it. Beauty is the symbol of divine love. Reason cannot define nor imagination fathom it; and he that bears the commission of that message can do no more than, by the simple eloquence of truth, to win the sympathies of men, and to train them, as he has trained himself, to see in the lineaments of beauty not the mere fancy of a fascinated sense, but a power overlying, underlying, pervading all things—the mystery of Beauty; not a mere quality of material, but an element of life; not a mere accident in Nature, but a designed purpose of its existence.

But if the hand of its Creator is to be sought in Nature, it must be upward and not downward. The destructive process of analysis would only dig deeper the grave of spiritual sense, if conviction were sought among the scientific tests of material evidence. There

is evidence most rich and precious in such phenomenal analysis; but the perception of the truth to which it witnesses varies according to the animus with which it is approached. To seek God in Nature, and to test His dealings with men as though He were a force, a quality, a machine, a thing obedient to the search or subject to speculation, which if wrong would fail, but if right would "find out God," would be to reverse the order of existence, and to make man, not God, the master.

Nor can intellectual analysis by the tests of philosophy succeed any better, for the same reason. The Master must be first acknowledged before he is sought. It is their Master and not man that must bow the heavens if He is to come down. So the search by hard reasoning stultifies itself, because on these most certain grounds it is unreasonable. The gist of the whole matter had been misconceived, and the scaling ladder had been placed on a wrong foundation, and against a wall where nothing was to be gained. But another mode of approach is possible, where reason would be right; for, on the ground of mere consistency, if spiritual Being is the object of inquiry, the evidence must be spiritual, no matter *through what means* it is conveyed, and its discernment must be spiritual also; and reason directed thus upward, and not downward, would then reach "the mind of God." So too Nature, the outcome of its Maker's inscrutable intentions, is incomprehensible unless similarly approached. The discoveries of science in material and life surpass all art and poetry in the sublimity of that view of Nature's perfect cosmos which they spread before the imagination. Whether they be her recorded facts, or theories so firmly based as to be accepted certainties, the revelations of science are precious stepping-stones, capable of leading to invaluable evidence; but, again, it is the animus

that takes those steps that leads either to light or darkness, if the attempt be to elucidate the ideal of what Nature is.

With such purpose in view, to study Nature's things without reference to that Master power whose will they unconsciously represent, would be to deviate at its very source the stream of all intelligence and response, to pervert and to befool the highest faculties of humanity, which have no worth in themselves nor meaning beyond themselves, except in relation to Him whose purposes, known or unknown, are the causes of their existence, and the only assignable reason of their being. The illimitable conceptions of which mind is capable are themselves a sufficient evidence that, in the sphere of human existence, material is but the method, not the end of life; and that steps of progress, if there be steps at all, must be steps trodden on sense for the very purpose of reaching things beyond sense. The beauty of the universe, which comes of the union of material and life, tells with irresistible evidence of an authorship and a rule of supreme Will; and that is a power inconceivable unless associated with personality of individual being. The unity of Nature implies the unity of that Will; but such supremacy as this surpasses government, for government is not an originating authority, but an intermediary power to continue order initiated by another, and therefore only sharing a divided allegiance. A supremacy compatible with perfection must therefore reach from beginning to end, and origin and destiny, no less than present rule, must be among its prerogatives.

But the upward steps which lead to such conviction as this do not stop here. We find here not only the action of one supreme and undivided Will, without which cosmos would be chaos, but beyond this the consideration of its perfect work forces upon our conviction

the complex character of that Will—a triple power, the power of initiative authority—the power of intermediary intelligence and contact between the formative command and the obedient material—and the power of administrative life, to which mind owes illumination, the forces of Nature their continuance, and the equilibrium of all things its stability. By such alone, whether creation be by immediate act or by endowment expanding itself to perfection through eternity, it matters not, for human mind can fathom neither—but by such alone and at once the very existence of the universe appears possible, and its beauty comprehensible.

The impulse of a spiritual ideal has ever been an agitating power within the human heart; but religion, which is its practical expression, has been too often and wilfully misconceived and mistaught, as though its origin had been in the consciousness of human weakness overwhelmed in contrast with Nature's power and immensity. But superstition is not religion, and devotion is incompatible with terror. The intuitive conscience of each individual, perceptive of its own position in the world, conscious, from the very nature of things, that the anomalies which surround it are but transitory—material combined with spirit, good and evil side by side—takes the order of beauty in the universe as its guiding light, and is conscious of the response of Nature's life to its own unutterable appeals. Thus is it that, pining for expression, the artist takes the things, the forms, the beings that surround him as the only available interpreters of his thought, the light and darkness, life and death, storm and calm, growth and decay, equal in their awfulness and in their beauty, and with them as the symbolic language of his conviction, his worship, and his love, he pours out his soul to God and man.

To such an one, the tenor of whose study for his art, among the things and effects of the world around him, has led him to regard beauty as but a veil separating the seen from the unseen of Nature, and through it to watch that great Master-spirit of life that moves among its vast machinery, it is as painful as it is strange to witness the course of other minds, profoundly trained in the knowledge of the same material universe, and of the relationship their own intelligence bears towards it, arriving by various paths of study to the same place as himself, but then to stop, refusing to go on. Whether it be from invincible aversion, or from the pride of ambitious intellect, mistaking its freedom for independence, their result is the opposite of his own. They appear to have placed intentionally a bar to all progress beyond their own special sphere of thought or knowledge, as though there were but one basis for reasonable intelligence, and but one approach to sure convictions. The disposition and habits to which their minds are trained are contrary to such considerations; for having eliminated from Nature its Creator and man's intelligent soul, as having no part in it, and content to register the appearances and to calculate the latent forces of Nature, but disregarding that *latent Life* which is the secret of them all, the direct and mechanical conclusions from material appear to them alone consistent with right reason, and all else no better than delusion. The subjects of their studies are, indeed, of inexhaustible interest, and the value of them inestimable to all mankind; but their pursuit appears at fault when the means, which seemed to minister to strength and breadth of intellect, end only in binding round it the bands of an exclusive system intolerant of all others beside or beyond it.

The ultimate goal to which such subjects of contemplation and study appear to other minds, that take

a larger range, less barred by speciality than theirs, naturally to lead, is the great truth which alone is of paramount interest to mankind, his destiny; but to such as refuse to look beyond the realm of sense, and cannot because they will not see, the result has too often been to habituate the mind to a strict and stern correctness in one direction alone; so the mental vision becomes warped and clouded to all else, and at last distorted to believe that nought else was possible. Intellect was glorified, but the soul ignored.

There is, however, another sphere of life and sight to which their eyes are never raised; and there is another atmosphere than that which impinges on the material to which they cling, the atmosphere of a liberty that is none the less complete because it acknowledges the service of a Master—for that service is one that saves a man from himself, and is his only perfect freedom..

To reach such healthy breadth of view, and to estimate aright, in their worth and relationship, the spirit of the man within him and of the material around him, the great machinery of his intelligence needs the mutuality of all its faculties as completely as those of the body are needed for the healthy action of its life. No mental function can arrogate its own independence and sufficiency without a fall. Conscience uninformed and undisciplined grows morbid and oblique; imagination may soar superior to the other faculties, but grows vain and bewildered without the weight and balance of the rest; so too reason and sense cannot stand alone without loss: unaided, they would make but a crippled machine to trust the course of life to, without conscience to restrain and imagination to liberate them. The work of imagination, too subtle for verbal definition, too vast and varied for mental grasp, thus disciplined, supported, and supplied, is, both in purpose and effect,

essentially and practically real; it is the source of invention in active life, of relief and exhilaration in wearied life, and the aid upward from baser to better life in whatever form it be regarded. Its work is no vague dream. The powers and beauty of the external world give form and fashion to it, whether in the realm of moral or material; to its authorship are due mankind's most imperishable monuments; but the promptings to which its own vitality responds (for all subjects take their colour from men's minds) come from the deep things of Nature, and those are no other than "the deep things of God." It is the mirror into which beauty is reflected, to be presented to the vision of the soul. It is the faculty through which the fine arts—those faithful intermediaries of all human sympathy—minister to spiritual life. When not marred and darkened by an evil will, it is a divinely-constituted means of spiritual intelligence, illuminating mortal sense from the fountain of immortality. It is a creative power within that gives form to spirit, substance to faith, and reality to the unseen. Without it how desolate the wilderness, how deep the darkness through which the spiritual vision strains toward the light that gleams above the horizon of mortal sense; but with unflinching gaze it follows upward to its source the ray that issues from the Light that lightens light itself. Imagination is that great faculty by which the soul ascends to the contemplation of the Divine nature, and listens to that Voice that is in the stillness of the universe. Without it that precious spark would die, which, among the paradox and mystery of existence, like a shining star, makes clear the pathway from the life we know to the life we are conscious of, but know not; supporting the timid soul by that certainty of its divine relationship which raises it for ever.

The immortal soul is self-conscious. It is conscious

too of universal life, and of its own place in it. Infidelity has offered to it the gospel of Death, and it has refused it. It is satisfied with the knowledge of the fact of mystery, as that without which eternity would be an idle void. It listens to the echoes of a distant past. It has never let go the hand of God. It sees and hears His guiding spirit in the trial sphere of human life. It knows His footsteps; it sees His light; it traces Him in the excellence and beauty of the universe, for all Nature is His parable.

But the influence of fine art upon thought and life, both in those who produce and in those who receive it, depends upon the tenor of individual disposition and capacity; for some minds turn all poetry to prose, and some invest the simplest things with the halo of their own brightness; and thus it happens that the appeals of beauty through the forms of art too often fail. Its elements are insoluble in some minds; and, as the course of life is often rough, and the ways of it not ways of pleasantness, but of infirmity and depression, it too often happens that, amid the absorbing necessities which harden practical life, fine art is valued by the multitude rather for its furniture than its poetry.

Regard for one moment the effect of a great picture and sculpture gallery upon the mass of the spectators. What do they find? a vast array of pictures and statues, portraits and landscapes of all nationalities; here and there a scenic representation of a religious subject from one school, or an academic composition from another; then, more rarely indeed, a gem of devotional expression; the rest are portraits, boats, or battles, or domestic scenes most picturesque, or of vice and revelry most offensive; and the sight-seers disperse, some perhaps delighted with their entertainment and exhilarated by its brightness, and some perhaps utterly confounded by

its multiplicity. But pause one moment. There were some who lingered there and went away thoughtfully, for there were those among that multitude—men, women, and children too—on whom some lovely ray of thought had struck. The poetry of colour, the mystic charm of Nature's truth and beauty, or the aspirations of devotional expression, still breathing from the surface of some old canvas as the poor artist had left it, with his last sigh, a legacy for the world, had found their kindred spirits, and had struck home at last. Those were the souls that Nature had already tuned, and the old artist's poetry had struck them and brought out their music.

But the source of the inspiration of art's poetry, that comes as a breath we know not whence, must be sought far deeper than in the emotion of the passing moment. The power whence springs that impulse, whose ultimate result is art, must not be measured by the means of its expression. The urgent motive, the rapid search, the restless spirit battling against the bondage of material—all witness to a living power impatient of control. That impulse is indeed vivid, vigorous, irresistible, as those who have felt it know right well, as though mastered by some mighty will, or urged forward by some great unseen hand; but *whence comes our power* to *respond* to it? Whence in our nature does that throb of sympathy arise that answers to the call of the spirit of beauty and truth? That power is ours, but it comes of too long an ancestry to be traceable only among the surroundings of present life. But are we left to that alone? Are love, thought, and memory bounded by its limits? Have hope and terror no history beyond the annals of humanity? Has the majesty of philosophy, the pride of knowledge, the reign of sense, ever satisfied mankind?

What is the secret of that power that holds the

mind enthralled as the after-glow of sunset fills the eyes? Whence comes that sense of rest and yet of longing, lingering desire as the sight loses itself in that ocean of light? Why no sense of solitude in those awful depths; no fear, but only joy in that sublime infinitude? Why? but for the conscious presence of more there than sight perceives. That glorious sheen of light and colour is but the clothing of a sphere of life into which we pierce and find no strangeness in it. Its fascination is not that of novelty, but of reminiscence. We are no more alone: a sense of relationship to all that sphere contains invites onward, as to a home once known and long since left, but not forgotten—another but a true sphere of life—a spiritual scenery reflected from heaven's mirror. Thus does sublimity of external effect, which only art's deepest poetry can recall, stir in the affections of the human breast the echoes of life beyond the horizon of our sight—a life not lost, but, like the sunset, sunk beneath the shadows of a distant past, shrouded from sight and interrupted for a while, as though to test fidelity—a life once ours, ours still, and ours for ever: no dream, but the conscious reality of the silent soul.

The spirit of beauty, whether enshrined in material or moral form, the beauty of strength or weakness, the beauty of reality or idea, all come from the same source whence our own nature itself has come, and has been endowed with power to feel and to comprehend it. That spirit of beauty, like the Spirit of the Eternal Being, of whose presence and character beauty is itself both the evidence and the purest symbol, is apprehended not by the scrutiny of the intellect but by the affections of the heart; and fine art, profoundly more a thing of spirit than of sense, is the minister commissioned to interpret its lovely parables to the world.

There is an Oriental adage that "Beauty is in the eye of him who sees it"—an expression most true, indeed, if by it is understood that power of mental sight beyond mere physical sense; for then the independence of the spirit of beauty is rightly apprehended as an element as subtle as life itself, an element of extraneous existence by which, through sense, the mental faculty is impressed; but it is most untrue if by that saying it be implied that the perception of beauty is but a whim or waif of poetic fancy, self-deceptive, applying a bright quality of itself to the things it calls beautiful; as though the emotions of the imagination were created by a power which it had first created itself!

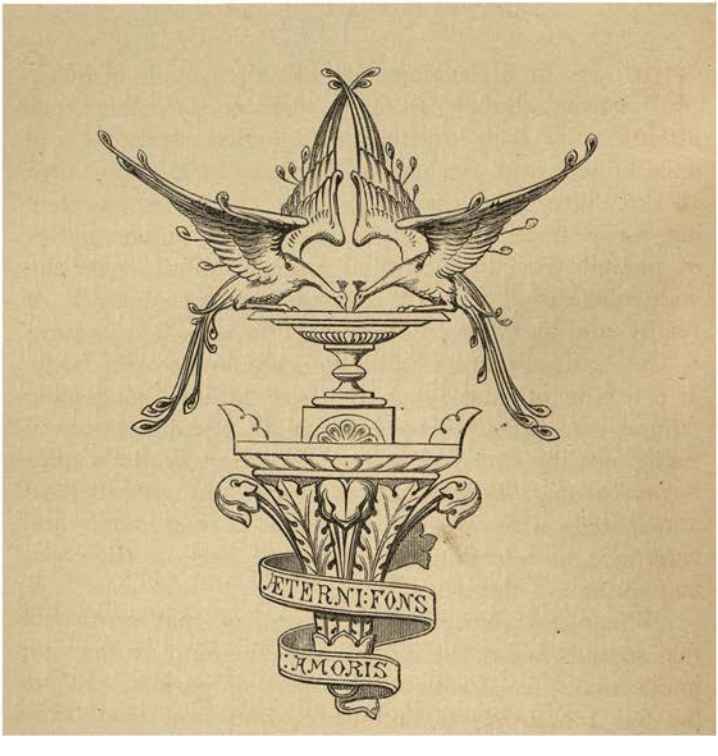
No; beauty, like the spirit of life, in its own nature infinite and independent, such as no time nor place can bound, no thought can grasp, nor words define, is the subtlest witness that the universe affords of the nature of spiritual life. It is as a bridge connecting two worlds: on one side leading to infinitude of all perfection, on the other, attached to material, not as though belonging to it, nor bounded by it, but transcending every quality it possesses, investing them with its own excellence, and overflowing them with its illimitable, irrestrainable stream of life. What is there in inert material, unfathomable mystery though it be, that can touch the spiritual element of mind and emotion? What sympathy can there be between what is lifeless, unstable, corruptible, and spirit—that thing of immortality? Surely none; but the spirit of beauty can and does transfuse material, and does animate the endowments of bodily sense with power to penetrate the thin shadow that separates those two worlds, and opens to the prisoned spirit of the man an access, clear and unrestrained, to the free air of the world invisible to him.

To such an one, whether practically an artist or not, but at least contemplatively one, whose powers of natural insight have been cultivated and refined by all that it is Art's sacred mission to teach—to such an one Nature has opened wide her treasury of divine life. She has spread before the eyes of his responsive spirit, in a vista of infinity, the mystery of divine beauty. Unsolved, unsolvable! He gazes with adoration; the highest faculties of his nature, of body, soul, and spirit, in silence bow before it. Sense perceives, imagination portrays, reason accepts, conscience assures, with all the power of their blended testimony, that that inscrutable mystery of beauty is the mode in which it has pleased the blessed God to communicate to His creatures the perfection of His wisdom and His love.

The sublime vision is beyond the range of mortal sight; the moral sense, that voice of the soul within, has answered "Yes"; and then the heart turns to its course in human life, the sphere of a short pilgrimage, fortified and content. The convictions which thought, study, and the experience of life had heaped together—stored, sorted, purified in the great laboratory of memory—have been illuminated by a ray from the throne of immortality. Fear vanishes. Difficulties which tempt, infirmities which impede, are but the discipline of an existence conscious of its own transitory nature. The way of life lies out before. The light of divine beauty has been shed upon it: and thus along the pathway of this mortal life, whether it be earthward or heavenward, the footsteps of the travellers are made light and their hearts rejoiced with the blessings of assurance and of peace.

Such is the lovely message that Fine Art is commissioned to carry to the world; and such is its work, to minister to the spiritual life of those who seek it.

The origin and consummation of beauty is in that love which God has said He "is." The communication of it is the expression of the Will of that love; and happy they who have their hearts pure and their intelligence of sense and spirit bright, to perceive, beneath the outward show of things, the living Majesty of that Wisdom, Power, and Love Divine, whence PERFECT BEAUTY, the fountain of all joy, flows forth for ever.



ESSAY IV

FINE ART IN ARCHÆOLOGY

THE arts in archæology are like the sounds of many voices coming from a distance, arresting our attention by their mystery of mingled clearness and uncertainty, and fascinating us more and more with all the charm of poetry's vague suggestiveness, as they die away upon the distant air. Such opportunities of mental travelling as their pursuit affords over the wide and varied area of past time is the romance of reality, and its intellectual locomotion is as invigorating to the spirit as change of air and scene is to the body. It is a kind of journeying free from all but pleasurable fatigue, so varied as to dismiss all weariness; or if sometimes the way seems long and the traveller's steps begin to flag, new interests break out where least anticipated, with all their cordial of new hope and enterprise, as refreshing to heart and sense as the oases and springs of the desert.

What can exceed the interest of that retrospect that spreads before the imagination the light of dawning intellectual life, of which the relics of earliest art are the few remaining testimonies? But now even they appear strange in age and origin, and the tale they tell seems so lost among the world's morning mists, that all we know of most of them is but the literary notice of some venerable author who handed on from an unre-

corded source a tradition that had interested him, and left for us no more than the whispering myth of a reality of which only the silhouette remains. Thus is the intensity of interest redoubled as we, who are antiquaries now, regard the works and records of antiquaries of a long past age, who themselves have plunged into the depths of the age before them. Such was Solon, and such his feeling when, having vaunted the glories and antiquity of his own nation, he sat wrapped in astonished interest as the Egyptian priest, smiling at his small notions of antiquity, recorded to him the origin of his own and other peoples from the great island continent, then long since no more, that once had all but filled the ocean space beyond the pillars of Hercules—that wondrous land, the great Atlantis, with its sheltering Alps and fertile plains, rich mines and crowded cities, inhabited by tribes now only dimly known as the Oceanides, the Atlantides, and the Hesperides, a real but now a mythic people, whose story lives only in the romance of unwritten history.

If archæology involved no more than a study of *things, old things,* it would still find favour with many minds; but as the study of old things implies also the study of all that throws light upon them, such as what a scientific man would call their environments, and a poet their associations, the boundaries of archæology become exceedingly wide, and its actual limits hard to define. In it the studies of the scholar, the philosopher, the poet, and the historian find full scope. Its wide range of interest, its scattered facts, its vague suggestive thoughts, tell how great the need its student has of quietude, time, and care, to brings its elements into focus, and to frame for the profit and pleasure of the world the varied pictures it presents. But time is the trouble of our age, and impatience its characteristic; so the genius of movement in this busy world is apt to

regard the antiquary as a sort of living curiosity. It looks on him as a creature infected with mould and rust, and has no idea of the enthusiasm which lies beneath his quiet skin. Happily for human nature, enthusiasm is of many kinds, and is often the shallowest where it is most demonstrative. The fact is that the world knows very little of its component parts, and little does it reflect on the words of the poet who spoke of men's "hermit souls"; but those words would go to the very heart of an antiquary, and express to him his very self; picturing to him the quiet depth of that stream of gentle but invincible enthusiasm which buoys him up and carries him through his work, brightening the spirit of his enterprise, and filling the mirror of his contemplation with ideas. I am not confounding perseverance with enthusiasm. An antiquary's work is hard, and there is no doubt of his perseverance if he be worth his rust. It might at first blush be hard to believe in the enthusiasm of writing a dictionary, or of collating dates, or of classifying musty deeds or rusty coins; but granting its indomitable perseverance, and granting, too, the dry, mechanical labour it involves, I believe that, without that quality of a deep and quiet enthusiasm which is the very life of all good continuous work, the spirit of the archæologist, whether he be historian, philosopher, poet, or antiquary, would sink beneath its work, and his "hermit soul" would die.

The association of fine arts with archæology, and the part they play in it, will be measured by the knowledge that people have of them, and be valued according to the tone and tenor of their many-sided minds. The thorough antiquary should be at once a historian and an artist. Art and history must go side by side in archæology to supply and illustrate each other, for what is history without poetry, and what is art without fact? History is the typal picture of men and things

in all time; and art is that power over material by which men in all ages have rejoiced in setting forth to others their deepest thoughts. Thus art and history are bound together, and poetry and philosophy belong to both; for philosophy is the moral of history, and poetry is that plastic power of illustration which gives life and action to it all.

What is it that fills the history of ancient art with all its vivid interest, and what is it that endows that art itself with all its captivating charm, but that it embodies the very soul of mankind? Facts and feelings are equally precious in any just and true estimate of human life; for feeling is, in truth, a great result, the end of a complicated tissue of sympathies and antipathies that may for the moment be taken as a point of rest. But life cannot rest, and the more intense its power to feel, the more impossible to rest. It may be stayed for a while in contemplation; it may ponder and linger captivated or overwhelmed: but the fire that smoulders will break out at last; and the result, in a burst of eloquence, poetry, or art, is the relief of the over-burdened mind.

To such an origin as this it is that we owe the birth, the growth, and the perfection of ancient art, with all its power to fascinate, to command, and to draw together the whole brotherhood of humanity. It is the design and intention, the warmth and passion of the living man, that glows in that ancient art, that makes it precious to us through all time. The intellect alone may be as cold as the moon and live, but art must have sun in it or die.

But the broad brotherhood of archæologists must not be expected to appreciate art alike. Their unanimous verdict would probably go at least as far as this, that its pursuit was interesting and pleasurable; but only those who could interpret its forms and features

into a living language could feel the sacred fire. But if the poetry and symbolism of perfect art is ill understood by some, the rudeness of primitive art, and that of half civilised nations, is even less so. But, in truth, rough work is often the most expressive, like a bold sketch dashed off under strong impulse. So with primitive art; its very roughness and impracticability are often the true signs of an impulse and an idea too big for the untrained mind to grasp, or the hand to form. The form of beauty or of power that the mind of such a man could grasp was one of hard severity, like his life. The angular boldness of its extreme simplicity was the very type of that life which gave it all its interest. It is folly to despise archaic art for want of beauty. It is better far to allow the weakness of the artist, and through his rude lines to love the man, and honour the grandeur of his emotions. There is more vigour of life and heroic grandeur in the bold action of the sculptures of Nineveh than in half the modern art we see, with all its perfection of anatomy and analysis of expression. There is often more touch of nature and intensity of feeling in the architecture and painting of our own middle ages than in many a modern work the world admires. It is folly to talk of their faults of technicality and want of precision, which are evident to all. For what is it that makes all ancient art precious but its testimony to the emotions that impelled it, and of that life, with all its surroundings, its nature, its motives, its joys and pains, that made those emotions possible?

Those works are the precious relics of men and nations; and cold is the sense and shallow the criticism that fails to trace, through all their faulty forms, the fire of their poetry; and through the rough hewings of their sculpture and the ideal conventionality of their painting, to reverence the simple grandeur of ancient days.

But the unpoetic or scientific archæologist, for

whom the sacred fire burns in vain, will hardly care to regard them in this light. He will be contented to allow that the fine arts have always been associated with the highest intelligence and civilisation of their age. His interest in them is rather for the witness they afford than the beauty they produce. He will value their styles as arbiters of chronology. He will trace up their origin to their fountain head in architecture. He will go farther, and trace up architecture itself to the necessities of construction and materials. He may, and probably rightly, attribute our pointed architecture, with all its grace and piquancy, to the inexhaustible genius of Oriental fancy. He may trace the perfect architecture of classic times to its earliest types in the constructive edifices of wood. The very form of the Pyramids suggests to him their origin, long before the earliest dynasty, in the heaps of piled stones which mark the passage or the resting-places of wandering tribes, or the monument of prehistoric victories. And further still in the depth of time, Chinese architecture, with its turned-up ridges and quirked gables, seems to him (as they certainly do to me) to find their first forms in the primitive huts and barns of a race living on the wide watery plains of that land of rivers, where the bamboo, reeds, and rushes gave the first materials ready at hand for roof and shelter.

Thus will he note the rise and progress of other arts, and trace their development from the ingenuity of human necessity to their employment for the purposes of social life; but his pleasure in the subject is solely intellectual, and beyond that his sympathies and profit *nil*. He goes in for knowledge, and the clash of theories and the intellectual pugnacity of schools and scholars only add to the zest and interest of his pursuit.

Others there are, true archæologists indeed, who seem to have reversed the order of life, and to have

turned the stream of futurity backward; individuals to whom pursuit means retrogression, and progress is scored only down the pathway of receding ages. Others again there are, as dry as dust, who love, if they love anything, only what they can see and touch of facts and things, antiquaries of the arid type, men of persistency, of large memories and small sympathies, to whom tedium is unknown, imagination a blank, and romance impossible; most useful men indeed, who repeat, only in reversed order, what their predecessors did, who in old days occupied the dulness of their uncounted hours in drawing up the inventories of household goods, and properties of church or state or private life; who doted over their dry lists, page after page with "item" this and "ditto" that, as an auctioneer glories over a catalogue, or a miser eyes his jottings of unprofitable coin; such dry chroniclers little dreaming, in their sleep of time, what mines of interest they were laying up for us, who draw from them pictures as true as though the realities were before us, of the character of those times remote, of the ways of social and domestic life, the pursuits, the habits, and even the moral worth of those who lived in them.

The works of art which are the glory of antiquity were accomplished in times when all the world was alert with intrigue or war, or in those short and stirring intervals of peace when warriors devoted their spoils of victory to their country's honour. Those too which adorn the ages nearer to our own, and which now stand up among us as the monuments of peace, the types of the religious spirit that had conceived them and the devotion that had realised them, were no less than their glorious predecessors the accomplishment of nations struggling with moral if not with martial foes, warring with barbarism and fighting for life, amid that movement of events, that gave the motive, the dramatic

action, the incident, and the very vital spark itself to their unconscious genius. Thus was it that, when all was astir with uncertainty and change, those immortal works of art and poetry were produced which shone like stars in the stormy sky of classic history, and like angels of consolation among the sighs and sorrows of the middle ages.

Most true it is that both heart and intellect are fed upon the stores of that continuous stream of life which flowed on from age to age, and has left along its banks the scattered pearls of human genius. Far off in the remote ages of geology we may begin to draw our first glimmerings of human history. Their silent annals present a counterpart to the world of intelligence and life, for deeper and deeper as the shaft is driven, the richer and more inexhaustible are the treasures of research; but the whole value of the past is in the use we make of it, and all our accumulated knowledge, whether of material or mind, is no more than lifeless fact and prosy chronicle till touched by the fire of human sympathy. Treasure is of no profit till it can pass into currency; and facts accumulated into mountains are useless to us until we assimilate them. We need to breathe and live on the fresh free air which blows over the wide field of life and things gone by; not only to fill our minds with knowledge, and store them with the treasures of resource, but also to freshen the motive and brace the heart for good work upon the world, the times, and the men around us.

It would be a melancholy system of dry morality, and a cold philosophy indeed that merely filled the mind with matter and ignored the heart and soul of humanity. The value of archæology, whether for the enlightenment or for the interest of maturer years, lies not in the pedantic knowledge of antiquity, but in the thought-felt, heart-felt realisation of its life.

Art is in its nature pure, vast, heaven-born, and the antiquary who takes the true, noble, and right view of the place and work of it in the world, will find that all the elements of his study in history, philosophy, poetry, and antiquity will concentrate upon it. He then estimates it no more as the mere furnisher of the illustrations of facts and things, but the embodiment of that life and spirit that make history live.

The retrospect of the world's story resembles the picture of individual life except in this, that the world's life is always young; its infancy veiled in impenetrable mist, its bounding youth an epic of heroism, blotted with fault, but starred with gems of virtue; its age a struggle of alternating progress and decline, but its life still young, and its winters the balance of a perpetual spring. Things and minds, not life, grow old; and it is that parallel of decline that gives to antiquity that touch of sadness in the sympathy of thoughts and things, long since passed away for ever, that intensifies its absorbing interest. That touch of nature that makes art so fresh and pure is the link of human brotherhood. In the depth of unrecorded geological age, the cave-man relieving the tedium of his weary life, etching with his flint arrow-point upon bones the forms of animals that peopled his lonely hunting-grounds, was but the elder brother artist, alive to the same charm of natural life, and impelled by the same motive spirit as young Giotto of our own age, as Cimabue found him drawing upon stones the forms of the sheep he tended upon the Tuscan Apennine. So too the potter of prehistoric days decorated his pottery with spots, lines, and chevrons, at Nature's own suggestion adopting the fundamental principles of repetition, proportion, and contrast, by which the most consummate art has ever since been ruled.

The unity of mankind is not more plainly shown

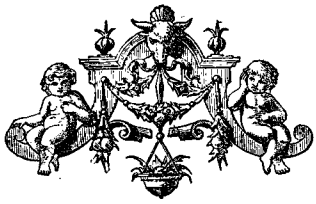
by its anatomy than by its habits and moral, as they are illustrated in the arts of life. It may be that here and there a rude race is found as that of Terra del Fuego, of the Andamans and the Australians—descendants of weak families pushed outwards and flying before the vigorous expanse of early migration, as wild animals fly before the advance of men; and who, isolated uncomputable centuries ago by changes of earth and ocean,—themselves originally outcasts, unintelligent, resourceless, and dispirited,—have lost their clue and tradition of community; and so utterly overwhelmed in the loneliness of nature and their own poverty and distress, that what little good they carried with them has dropped out of memory. But with all others, whether in the happier climes or the most distant refuges of the world, their story, as written in their arts, tells, from remotest ages, the same tale, that as with ourselves, the same aspirations stirred them, the same needs, the same motives, the same energies moulded the habits of their life.

It is thus among the *associations of life*, to which the relics of art are the unfailing witnesses, that archæology draws the subjects of its deepest interest. Its paths may not be always easy, but the tracks of human feet that have trodden them before, are the secret of that fascination which tempts us onward. Uncertainty increases interest, and a sense of mystery adds zest to the pursuit, as they lead on amidst that silent and shadowy scenery of the past, where time itself is lost in mist and the last fading colours of tradition die away; but even there, with apparently no more than the materials of antiquity around us, the breath of thought still rests upon their forms, and the deep silence is broken by the whispers of life.

Artists engrossed in their work are little aware how often they portray themselves. Their friends and

critics call it mannerism, but the touch of art is deeper and more subtle than the accidents of style. Music, painting, and sculpture lend themselves plastically to individual character, and even the calculated forms of architecture, which seem to allow no place for elasticity, tell the individuality of mind and hand.

Thus has art in archæology spread out in the dim light of centuries a picture within which is concentrated, with truest portraiture, the habits and characters of all ages and generations of mankind; a picture of the realities and the romance of human history, but pre-eminently a picture of the unbroken affinities of human nature, and the brotherhood of human souls. For if it be that in the records of history we trace the life—if in the annals of commerce and of travel we ascertain the habits—if in literature we learn the wisdom—it is in art that, throughout the ages of the past, we feel the spirit, and we mingle with the hearts of men.



ESSAY V

THE MINISTRY OF COLOUR TO SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

PART I—COLOUR AND SCULPTURE

IN Nature, colour serves many purposes; in Art, its service is to make beautiful things more beautiful: ugly things it cannot serve, but to intensify their ugliness. Nature affords us no reasons for its selection, so we may be tempted to regard its use of colour as arbitrary; but it can hardly be so, where, as in universal nature, system and reason are supreme. We have no right to affirm natural colour to be arbitrary and without law, any more than the winds. Nature is nowhere lawless. There must be some law in the natural employment of colours. Indeed it may not be a mere childish dream that a deeper law and purpose, than our weak faculties can fathom, may underlie those mechanical relations which we attribute to chemistry and light. The power of colours is a mystery to which something in our inward nature responds, a method of expression of which we hardly yet have learnt the alphabet. It is indeed hard to believe that such traits of loveliness as are possessed by the colours of external nature can be mere mute and arbitrary signals without significance. We hear their music, and we are entranced by it, but we cannot tell whence it comes, or whither it goes. A law it must have, but it is one that all the chemistry

and mathematics of our science fail to explain; and imagination, which goes deeper than them all, to the very depths and springs of our nature, can tell no more than of their mystery and their beauty.

Whatever be the law that orders their relation to the things they adorn, it is measurable, if measurable at all, only by special aptitudes of mind and sense; but even here there is no basis for comprehension, for the perception of colour is so various, that sense disagrees about its use; and minds susceptible of the moral of it, form their estimate according to their own individual intelligence. Where then is the conclusion to be? That which in its own nature is infinite, which sense cannot exhaust nor mind fathom, which seems to play with all the fickleness of fire, but is subject to laws which rule its apparent license into an exquisite order, we must be content to accept as a wonder and a joy.

An artist needs to have a spirit of very subtle penetration to comprehend in one broad grasp the material and moral qualities of the things that Nature has lavished for his use. His main difficulty is in their selection. Such is the infinitude of forms and colours, an infinitude made still more embarrassing by their combination, that only those who know not what there is to know, will plunge into art with reckless haste, as though its heights were to be scaled with ease, or its pathway only strewn with flowers.

A student has plenty to learn, but learning in art is not like learning facts and figures that serve to train him for other things, for art is a speciality to be learnt rather by training faculties than by learning rules; for though there are great principles to be mastered, and great experiences to be gained, there is no hope where the heart does not go before the education. A pupil needs first to make the elements of his art as though they formed part of his very nature, and then at last

as an artist to use them for his heart's expression. If sculpture be the art of his choice, and he be blessed with a genial spirit that can descend from the upper airs of abstract idea to the sphere of common men, he will inevitably be some day struck with the contrast between the works of his hands and the models from which he had fashioned them. Those works may be beautiful, but they have stopped short and vaunt their superiority in their sublime ideal of abstract form. The idea was fine, but the method of attaining it afforded no reason for stopping where he has stopped. He realised figures of ideal representation—a hero, a goddess, what not? by idealising the forms of Nature, that is, by modulating those he saw to those conceived in his imagination, till the special figure of his conception was complete. If then Nature be not transgressed by taking such mental liberties with her forms, why should any violence be implied by applying the same liberty to colours? Thus, at the outset, interesting problems will arrest him, and, among them, few will be more difficult to solve than the relation of forms to colours. They appear to be distinct entities, and to have no necessary relationship, but Nature has made them inseparable, and, when harmonised, they charm our sight and master our moral sense, and come at last to be in the artist's hand a power to arouse every emotion, and excite every passion of our nature.

The perception of colour is a speciality. Some people feel colour, some people only see it, or think they do; but eyes might be equally faithful in them all for the mechanism of sight, but the intelligent perception of colour is a very different matter, and varies in them from a reality to a blank. Colours are the creatures of light, and where light is there are colours. White is beautiful, more by association than in reality. All colours are contained in it, for it is not by their

annihilation but by their union that they produce white. We associate purity with white: but colours are as pure; it would be hard to find impurity in the rainbow, but there is no white there. Sea-foam and snow, a chalk cliff and a lily, are white, but all their whites are different; and every undulation of form, every half tint or light reflected upon them, and, still more, their shadows, make those whites again more different. Why do we associate perfect purity with white? Is it not because of its exquisite union of all colours? We do well to treasure the idea of its purity, but none the less is colour pure. The snow-white mountain against the mid-day blue is as the white of an opal, and as the morning rises and the evening sets upon it, it turns to gold and ruby, and at night it is more silvery than the moon. Those colours are but elements of its whiteness, and are as veils of beauty thrown over it, in Nature's varying moods. Colour is all pure in itself, and it is perhaps the very intensity of our sense of its perfect purity, that induces our dread of art's imperfect use of it; as though colour were an element so divinely pure as could be entrusted only to that Hand that clothed all Nature with it.

If form be pure, then colour purely used can only enhance that purity, for it is but an ethereal element of light. The forms of sculpture are not changed by it; but it may be that for want of custom or experience our inner sense is confused by that union of form and colour; still it is unreasonable to object, except on confession of our mental inability to reconcile our sense or mind to the union of what our habits of thought had separated. But were they, are they right in that separation? where is their authority? Certainly not in Nature, for in all that surrounds our life colour is everywhere; but the sense of abstract purity conveyed by white is so universal and so strong,—and in our

inward conviction its symbolism is so sacred, that to offend it would be sacrilege. But if colour is as pure as white, as the very elements of that which is pure cannot be less pure than that which they combine to produce, and the source from which they flow, may not the intelligent sense of colour demand an equal courtesy of respect? In light is the fountain of all existence; it brings life with it, and whether in the unity or the separation of its elements it is equally an emanation of divine beauty.

The greatest difficulty that art has to meet, in its communication of thought from man to man, is that variety of disposition and sense that results in a tangle of irreconcilable convictions which no reasoning can touch, because the very basis of comprehension does not exist between them. We must therefore agree to differ, and we must respect each other's differences; for the senses to which art addresses itself are the endowments of our individual natures; and art's best hope is in her power both to delight and teach, and thus to break through the crust of indifference or inability, and to enter, as naught else can enter but by appeal to the universal sympathies of mankind, by inspiring thoughts that turn men's minds inwardly upon themselves, and lead them at last to the perception of that soul in art, which, through the skilful semblances of outward beauty, appeals to them and wins them.

In practice the association of colour with sculpture can be only rightly conceived by mastering the proprieties of it, proprieties that are not limited by what such form or colour might be in Nature, but such as would best aid the expression of the idea they are designed by the artist to convey. The conception and choice of colours are apt to be embarrassed by the recollection of them in relation to accustomed forms

and effects, and thus associating them in our ideas with truth and untruth. But if sculpture be rightly understood as appealing to the moral and intellectual sense, rather than by mockery of imitation to delude the sight, all the choice of form, composition, relief, colour, and all else that combines to produce its expression, must be guided by an art that would of necessity include the idea of nature and reality; but at the same time would assume, with all the supreme authority of genius, the power and the right to use and modulate the whole scale of those material means, and so to embody its life and purpose as genius had itself conceived them.

With this view and to this end it is at once clear that the conception of colour, in its relation to all arts, must come from within, from the mental reflex of external truth; and the associations of its truth or untruth, its fitness or unfitness, must be grasped as completely in relation to idea as to fact. Colour, as art uses it, is true when it is true to the great purpose of its existence, viz. to enhance existing beauty, by the marriage of two beauties, of form and of itself, thus making one. It is untrue when its purpose is a lie, by the attempt to make a thing appear what it is not. The nude of a statue is not flesh, the drapery of it is not stuff of woven flax or wool, and colour that would be used in either case with the purpose of deception, would be a falsity and offence. Those forms were conceived, composed, and executed to satisfy the sculptor's impulse, to present to others the embodied idea of what his own heart and mind had drawn from the depths of Nature's inspiration; and just as his idea may have been one of power or of tenderness, of simplicity or majesty, of life or death, his purpose was so to arrest the minds of other men as the inspiration of it had arrested and overcome his own; and then,

if, in the completeness of his art, he let colour come to breathe upon those forms, it was not to flush their surface with a mock reality, but to perfect their ideal, by making tenderness more tender, death more solemn, life more lovely, majesty more sublime.

Do you ask how is all this to be obtained? I can only reply that no mortal can teach the secret of it; for there is nothing in the whole range of art more spontaneously artistic, undefinable, and ideal, than the relation of colour to form. The perception of it lies in intuitive genius; and the only ruling of it is that of a pure mind and of a knowledge, taste, and judgment profoundly matured.

It is a laudable jealousy that would restrict an art to its own sphere, and so far as this is the opponent motive to the use of colour with sculpture, it is worthy of all respect; but the limits of any art's sphere are not easily assigned; its characteristics may be readily defined, but they are not its exhaustive definition. When Socrates, himself a sculptor in his youth, said to his friend Crito that the province of sculpture was "to represent the emotions of the soul by form," he beautifully expressed the speciality of the art; but art is too elastic and expansive to be shut up within the limits of an aphorism. As well might we say that "the province of eloquence is to express the emotions of the soul by words;" but what does not intonation of voice, expression of countenance, and bodily action add of life and power to those words? So too in sculpture the intonation of its material may be invaluable in its effect on form, as Gibson felt when he wrote to a friend "form is spiritualised by the tinting; it *makes us forget the material:* the Greeks were right." Sculpture from the days of Dædalus to Praxiteles has progressed, like every other art, by the gradual accumulation of graces; and in its progress it has been so

sensitive to external influences that the poetry, the philosophy, and the contemporary civilisation, have affected it throughout. The merely abstract ideal of "form" in sculpture was by itself insufficient "to express the emotions of the soul;" so poetry suggested the attributes of the figures, philosophy and religion suggested its motive and symbolism, refinement of civilised life suggested its accompaniments and accessories of expression, all which the sculptor felt by turns, and breathing into his work the breath of his own life, he reproduced the influences he had received. Still "form" was indeed paramount, as words are paramount in eloquence; and all that accompanied form was but an item of accumulated grace to give it moral and intellectual interest, and thus to emphasise the speciality of its beauty. So Socrates's dictum remains unquestioned; but as form is precious not merely "for the expression of the sculptor's soul," but still more for that of humanity, the power of its beauty is at once asserted, and all that could help its interpretation, as in some cases at least the added element of colour might do, would enhance and endear it to mankind: and thus men would feel "the emotions of their own souls" relieved in the expressive eloquence of the artist's work.

Each art has indeed its own sphere, but each has many spheres within itself; and to these it must be true, and by their limits alone can it be fairly barred. Within them all is liberty, a liberty that is conscious of itself; and, conscious of the dignity of self-restraint, it ranges with freedom within the fences that "*truth to its own purpose*" has alone the authority to impose. Where then is the career of sculpture to be stopped? Sculpture is not limited by its subjects. Carving may mark its lower, statuary its higher sphere; but from the flowers and fruit of Grinling Gibbons to the Venus of Praxiteles

all is sculpture. The panels of Ghiberti's doors may seem to invade the art of painting, and the Cariatides of the Erectheum to trespass upon true architecture; but all these are recognised as not only beautiful but legitimate, because they are seen to fulfil their various purposes with propriety and grace. Where then is the limit to be placed?

Again I must say that no mortal can teach the secret of it; and no rule but "truth to its own province" can limit any art: a rule indeed dangerously indefinite, a free will that is open to good or evil, like that of the life of men and nations, of which fine art is the reflection and the exponent. Purity, propriety, and truth are counsels of perfection exquisitely ideal, and by their standard must all fine art be judged; but the words have not yet been written that could frame the indictment.

All art is the union of material and mind, and it is the artist's touch that makes and consecrates their marriage. In sculpture it is not merely by the choice of subjects nor the composition of its forms, but by the subtlety of touch that it fascinates the world. But the sculptor's work, however beautiful in other ways, may be marred by imperfections of its surface. There is hardly a limit to its finish. It is the unceasing movement of undulation on the surface of a statue that gives it, from every point of view, that mystery of rounded profile that captivates the sight. Much of this effect may be due to the material, and white marble has been the sculptor's favourite resource, as offering the greatest facilities and the fewest defects. Materials of dark colour, like bronze and porphyry and black marble, need highly-polished surfaces to make their modelling visible, and consequently are liable to the disagreeable effect of bright high lights in violent contrast to their local colour, all which is avoided in white marble.

The brilliant high lights that give vivacity to pottery are not equally agreeable as bright spots on the muscles, limbs, and features of a statue. A surface of modified lustre is the best; but even that depends somewhat on the tone of it. Pure white marble, freshly cut, fails to show the delicacy of its modelling as the same would show it, if relieved of its intense glare of whiteness. So terra cotta has been a favourite and successful material from the soft richness of its tint. Ivory too has been so for the same reason, and for the facility of its colouring. But marble is the queen of all materials for sculpture; and, to remedy its one defect of whiteness the greatest artist of art's greatest days supplied to it, by a simple artifice, what time has done to it for us by the mellowing effect of age.

It is not merely to the ocular but to the mental vision that sculpture addresses itself, and hence the difficulty of its complex artifice. The works are addressed to the world at large, and are felt and thought about, just as it may happen that they fall on heedless or thoughtful eyes; how much therefore their effect depends on external circumstances it would be hard to exaggerate. We, whose sight is trained to the veiled light of northern sunshine, can only realise by imagination the needs of southern eyes. They crave for colour. Their bright atmosphere imbued their very nature, and even where, from mere habit, all idea and thought about it was a blank, the mental happiness, unconscious of its source, was there, and came of the soothing joy of satisfied sense. Colour was with them a necessity. As their world would be lifeless without it, so their works without it seemed bald and wanting. It would be hardly chargeable with exaggeration to say that their works were always coloured either artificially or by the choice of material; for there is no style nor period of art, when by some form of evidence,

direct or indirect, it may not be asserted that colour was an element of it.

Colour, as bluntly conceived by unaccustomed minds, must not be confounded with the refined delicacy of its use in the hands of a consummate artist. The language of colour has an unwritten grammar, that has a phraseology of its own according to its varying mood and purposes. Some plain rules and great principles may be laid down for its use, but beyond them the true artist's use of it must be learnt by the love of it, and matured by that thought and care to which that love alone is sure to lead. Doubtless it needs a natural aptitude for its comprehension; but it is a great reality which those who cannot appreciate must be content to accept. They may glory in the colours of pictorial art, but they battle with the idea of colour used with sculpture, because their sense is confounded by what their minds fail to reconcile.

In early days of art it may have pleased barbarous eyes, and in better times even those blinded by the affections of archæological association, to have seen the statues of the gods daubed with vermilion; and such may have been the result of habit even upon the most trained eyes and taste, that all sculpture may have seemed wanting in effect without at least some colouring, where the very air itself was full of colour, making the cold white marble an offensive blot. But be the colouring of their sculpture what it might, its object could not have been illusion, nor its principle that of bare naturalistic reproduction, for it is impossible to believe that such heroes of art's acme, as those of the days of Pericles, could for a moment have tolerated the annihilation of all their art's poetry by the substitution of the base for the ideal, the sham of reality for the truth of feeling, in the production of what even to our

inferior sense and taste could be only stigmatised as demonstrative vulgarity.

If we seek a guide to our judgment on such subjects and look back to the days that all regard as those of art's perfection, we find our views enlarged and our practice modified by such a review. They must be so only with this reserve, that no age must be the slave to another, nor one country to another's arts, which the exigencies of their climate and the habits of the people must originate and naturalise among them, if their arts are to be worth their name. In looking for precedents to such times, difficulties arise from the absence of any complete examples, and from our dependence on the writings of travellers, archæologists, and dilettanti, who were not experts in the arts they describe. Still, such is the aggregate testimony, that all great principles involved are clear enough to reconstitute those arts, so at least as to represent them to our minds, though our skill might fail to reproduce them.

In early poetry and early art we find the germs of what maturer times produced. It needed the sunshine of national enthusiasm to complete their growth. The earliest sculpture that we know was painted, or made or ornamented with coloured materials. As we might expect, all eyes turn southward for any historic art with the attribute of early genius; and thence sculpture came with all its colour, and there many of its ancient models still remain. Eastward too there was light and warmth and wealth for art's development, and, what was needed also, the cultivated civilisation and natural aptitude of the people. Architecture, providing for life's earliest necessities, was the first to be developed; and with that we are at once introduced to the use of colours. Sculpture followed as its natural relief, with its forms of mingled wood and marble, painted and clothed with embroidered drapery. From the splendid

palaces of Assyria to the temples on the Nile all was coloured. Even where the dread of idolatry excluded imitation, as in the temple of Solomon, no limit was imposed on the glorification of all other modes of art with gold and vermilion, cedar, ivory, and metals, "bright ivory overlaid with sapphires and pillars of marble set in sockets of gold."[1] Although the artists may have been comparatively rude, rejoicing in effects of colossal size and gorgeous display, they certainly had mastered the great principles of adapting material and ornament to their right place and purpose. Their art was essentially objective. It needed centuries of refining civilisation to develop the subjective sense of beauty and expression; and still more to reach that most abstract of all phases of art, when an uncoloured statue became a possibility.

The arts travelled westward with all their tradition of splendour and their strange mixture of barbaric and refined idea, consecrated by associations of antiquity; with combinations of material and skill that East and South had brought into full practice, and needed only the genius of Pheidias to bring to perfection. The sculptured wall-pictures of Nineveh and Egypt, the golden gates of Shalmanezer's palace,[2] with their processions of countless figures in relief and incidents of history and warfare, were the first suggestions of an art perfected at last in the friezes of Athens and Pheigalia.

Such were the conditions, the forms, and materials of art that the Greeks received as a precious legacy from the nations of the world; and, with the mighty mind and skill of that great people, they perfected and adapted them to their own national character and use.

[1] Canticles V., vs. 14-15.

[2] The gates from Ballawatt, now in the Assyrian Department, British Museum.

Transforming them by their genius, transfusing them with their poetry, they made them all their own. Greece plucked the fair flowers from the gardens of her neighbours, and sowed their seed at home, that when they bloomed again they might be only Greek.

The inquiry into their use of colours at the highest period of their arts is not easily satisfied, because it depends in great degree upon the careful inference of experts, and cannot be, except in a few cases, positively demonstrated. We acknowledge their authority, and without yielding a tittle of the genius and power of our own times, we may accept the canons of their taste, and profit by their experiences. But colours are themselves so frail and fugitive, and the preparatory film of material on which they were laid was so tender, that scarcely a scrap of them remains. The deep recesses of sculptured forms, the sheltered corners of walls and hollowed mouldings alone retain the evidences of what once covered them. The descriptions of ancient travellers, the quotations from ancient authors, the discoverers of our own time who have dug out broken remnants that carelessness, fanaticism, or greed had failed to destroy; the inferior works of latest classic work exhumed from buried cities or found upon the ruins of ancient monuments and cemeteries, preserve at least, although in shadowy forms, the traditions of the arts of past great days, and make, with rare exceptions, the total catalogue for our reference; still they are sufficient to convince unprejudiced judgment, that colour was an important element of sculpturesque and architectural effect in the greatest works of classic art. Materials that in the South and East were common, with us are rare; and we are too apt to appreciate for their rarity what the great artists of antiquity valued only as subservient to the production of their effects: so they gilt and painted what we should quail to touch.

But it is a grievous task to attempt description of them, or to convey to others the true import of one's words, where all depends upon the subtleties of art. The refinements of artistic sense are indescribable; form cannot be conveyed in words; and of colour it is hopeless to insure the true impression, where each mind takes them in its own sense, and the bare mention of them suggests to many an effect of glare and violence, when all that was meant might have been but the tenderest blush of white or the opalescence of a pearl.

Wherever we look among the sites of ancient celebrity, as at Ægina and Athens, in the Morea or in Asia Minor, at Olympia and Halicarnassus and the islands of the Ægean; at Pæstum, Girgenti, or Selinunte, and among the countless remains scattered far and wide, but of which all trace or name is lost: unquestionable evidences from travellers whose very purpose as scholars and artists was to search out and verify the history and arts of classical antiquity, all combine to one and the same result. In many places the colouring remained bright; in others, where the gold or encaustic had perished from the sculpture, the stain remained; where the colour had faded from the architecture the etched outlines showed where the architect had designed upon his mouldings the ornament for the painter: holes in the marble plainly indicated where metal decorations had been fastened on the frieze, where the gilt bronze harness had been fitted to the horses, and where helmets and weapons had been attached to the figures of gods and men.

But beyond the mere fact of the existence of this colouring that which gives special interest to its varied use is the plain distinction which had evidently prevailed between the treatment of different kinds of sculpture, namely, that in high or low relief and the two distinct classes of statues—those associated with

architecture and those independent of it. If it be borne in mind how absolutely distinct is the principle of architectural effect from that which constitutes the beauty of independent statuary, the principles of all ornamental treatment will fall at once into distinct and reasonable systems. For instance, in sculpture, taken independently, however definite the composition may be, however bold its effects of contrast and relief, its beauty depends on those qualities which exemplify life; and the blending together of its distinct features, and the modulation of the curves and undulations of surface and profile into one another, are the special elements of its treatment. In architecture, on the contrary, its composition is based on precisely opposite principles of construction and effect. There is no blending of its parts, no softening of its outlines, no thought of life—(not that architecture lacks life, for every fine art is a thing of life, and in architecture its vitality is the measure of its excellence, the life of idea from which it sprang, and the life implanted in its every feature by the mind and hand that executed them). This contrast between architecture and sculpture will be better appreciated by remembering that every feature in architecture is an entity complete in itself, cut off from every other by sharp definitions, as the abacus separates the capital from the entablature, and the astragal cuts off the capital from the shaft, the metopes, the triglyphs, the frieze, the cornice, or the arch having each a complete individuality and independence—except that Art has so built them up together, and so combined their differences, as to make of them all one completed thing of beauty.

The beauty found in each of these two arts depends of course on the excellence of its artistic treatment. If then any other art, as that of colour, comes to be employed upon them, or any ornamental material be

used to enhance their effects, such art must follow the ideals of their distinctive beauties, and maintain their respective characters, if it would not disfigure rather than adorn them; and such were the plain and simple principles which, whether thought out or instinctively perceived, appear to have been accepted and practised by the greatest Greek artists.

Thus their architecture was *parti-coloured* and treated with no feeble hands; and this leading principle, viz. their recognition of the entire distinctness of each architectural feature, is exhibited in the method of their coloured treatment of it: for instance, triglyphs were usually painted in positive colours, without regard to the metopes between them. A traveller at Athens in 1837 described a metope lately found there as "sculptured in high relief, and painted red, blue, and green," but the flats of the architrave below them appear quite plain. Mouldings were selected for special colouring, such as the bands of richly-polychromed design of honey-suckle scrolls and frets which covered the grouped mouldings of the pediments and the level cornices of the finest marble models of Grecian architecture; and belts of deep colouring were carried independently all round these buildings, like the band along the peristyle above the Panathenaic frieze. The ground of that frieze was blue, and the figures relieved with gold and colours, some of the horsemen's head-dresses being coloured and their arms and ornaments gilt, while, in strong contrast, the bulk of the architecture beneath them was left plain.[1]

[1] There is now no irrefragable evidence whether the *external* plain surfaces, such as columns, the flat parts of entablatures, etc., of *marble* architecture were or were not generally coloured. That the marble was coated with encaustic, whether as a preservative or to impart high finish to it, is from Vitruvius's account, writing from Greek sources, probable; but whether *those parts* were coloured or not cannot now be assured. The mouldings have the most positive evidences of colours and their patterns;

The grounds of the tympana and metopes were painted everywhere, in some cases, as in Sicily, red, in others, as in Greece, blue, against which the statues were relieved, and when nude were comparatively plain; while in strong relief, their emblems, arms, drapery, and ornaments were boldly marked with colour, gilding, and metal-work. They grouped with the architecture, and *as architecture was so were they.* The capitals of the antæ and of the colonnade under the porticoes were painted and gilt, while the white marble columns and capitals of the great peristyles were left uncoloured. Thus by all of these, which are but typical illustrations of what is found elsewhere, we perceive that the same principles on which architectûral construction depended—that is to say, on the *distinct individuality of each feature*—so also the colouring of the *associated sculpture* appears to have been ruled, viz. by the *arbitrary selection of a fine constructive taste*, taking parts here and there and loading them with richest decoration, and leaving the rest plain stone or marble.

The statues in the pediments at Ægina may be too archaic to guide our taste; but in them we have at least the plainest record of this traditional treatment of architectural sculpture, and the finer statuary of the Theseum may be quoted to the same effect. In both cases, indeed in all cases where fine Greek art has been sufficiently preserved to illustrate it, the colouring was positive, and composed in no relation to the picture or wall painter's art, but architecturally; indeed so powerfully so as to have been too self-assertive and dis-

but the thin pattina of colour on the large plain surfaces, if they had any, would have perished before the writers, on whom we depend, had seen them. Stone temples were coated with cement, as at Pæstum and in Sicily; the question being whether these, of which there is no doubt about their colouring all over, were so coloured in imitation of their greater models of art, viz. those of marble? Pliny, Pausanias, and Lucian, and Vitruvius wrote of them about five hundred years after they were built.

agreeable but for their association with a parti-coloured architecture. If this were an archæological or controversial volume instead of an essay limited in its address, very much detail could be mentioned here to illustrate further this clear and distinct character of architectural treatment, and of the difference between architectural and independent sculpture; but it may be said without prejudice that while some parts may have been left without definite tint beyond that of the wax and oil of the encaustic, in such pediments as those of Olympia and the Parthenon, just inference leads to a contrary opinion as to those of the more archaic Ægina and the highly-decorated Theseum at Athens; it is at the same time most unlikely, that those apparently uncoloured figures could have remained crude as they left the sculptor's or the mason's hands. It should be remembered that we are here referring to no ordinary works, or ordinary criticism, but to artists of unequalled refinement, and a population of extraordinary perception, who, undisturbed by the multiplicity of such life as ours, passed an out-of-door life, identifying themselves with their national arts, and regarding them not as the merely ornamental accessories of life but as important elements of national glory. Such men would regard all works of art around them with a seriousness and reality that a modern would smile at. They valued things not for their material but for their effect, and if the unmitigated glare of such a sunshine as theirs interfered with the perfection of sculpturesque effect, as in the delicacies of half-tints and reflected lights it certainly would, it is reasonable to infer that some treatment would be adopted to remedy such defects. As we see those marbles now, time has mellowed them; but it has bared them also of the materials of that treatment by which their surfaces had been originally mellowed, viz. of that tender film by which the encaustic painter

had prepared them for colouring and gold, which has all likewise perished. But we are not altogether left in ignorance about these matters, for Greek artists and architects left writings descriptive of their principles and systems on many subjects, such as perspective, geometry, proportion, anatomy, and methods of painting, of which Vitruvius availed himself, and has preserved many valuable details from them. The originals have perished, but we have his description of the old Greek system of preparing walls for painting, and the method of treating the marble surfaces of both statues and walls. Pliny quotes from the same authorities, which lead to the inference that the encaustic preparation was all but an universal practice; and by our own experience we know how the wax and oil, with or without resins, rubbed in and fixed by heat affects the marble, giving it a peculiar quality of effect between white alabaster and ivory, and either tinting it or not as may be: but in either case blending it with the coloured and otherwise rich effect of all around it.

It appears therefore that the treatment of architectural and independent sculpture differed on plain and reasonable grounds. The former had *made* part of a complex effect, and in consistency with the demand of artistic breadth, it had yielded to the stern demands of architectural composition. Colour had formed a very important part in it. Independent statuary, on the contrary, was clear of all obligation, and its colouring had relation to itself alone. With exception of a few touches of colour on drapery and accessories, to save the whole from insipidity, the treatment appears to have been very tender, the main purpose having been to clear the supports and parts of inferior importance from the figure itself, and thus by contrast to emphasise the beauty of the nude.

The great chryselephantine statues of Pheidias at

Athens and Olympia, and the Hera of Polycleitus with its ivory arms, its gorgeous robe and throne of gold, have had all the splendour of their colouring described by eye-witnesses; but both through them and by the positive evidence of modern research, we know that all this magnificence of material was not isolated, but formed part of the general effect, being supported by other sculptures, by inlaid paintings, by coloured walls, such as those by Panænus round the screen of the sanctuary at Olympia, by decorative metal-work, embroidered drapery, and coloured marbles. And thus the breadth of result that an artist's sense demands was secured: but on individual and independent statues such was the influence and such the demands, of all the coloured materials around them everywhere, without which ancient art appears to have been regarded as incomplete, that these too were not left of unstained or unalloyed metals, nor of crude untempered marble. Details of universal use, the common daily effects of things, are not noticed in written records. The very commonness of that use of colour accounts for the rarity of remarks about it. Great works, that we know to have glowed with it, are described by ancient authors without a word about their colouring. It was taken for granted in sculpture as well as in architecture; and unless for some special reason we only incidentally come upon the notice of it, as in Virgil's dedication to Venus of a figure of Cupid with many-coloured wings and a painted quiver, and of a marble statue with crimson sandals to Diana; or when Callistratus admires the blush on the cheeks of a bronze cupid by Praxiteles, or where the sculptor Aphrodisius is designated as the sculptor and statue painter (Ἀγαλματοποιὸς ἐγκαυστής), mere passing notices, which could be greatly multiplied, and which by their incidental character testify to the ordinary nature of

the remarks. The greatest works of Greek independent sculpture appear not to have been of marble but of bronze and other metals; indeed the list of materials used in them reads like a catalogue of colours. The metals were varied by alloys, stained surfaces and gilding, and the marble when it left the sculptor's hand was submitted, for complete finish, to another art than his. The profession of the statue painter was one of recognised importance, and his confraternity appears to have included the distinct occupations of the encaustic painter, the gilder, and the stainer,[1] skilled decorators, but in their ways artists. The encaustic was variously compounded of wax, oil, and resin, and sometimes tinged with colours, as the "circumlitio variata" mentioned by Seneca implies. It gave to fresh marble the mellowness of age, and aided the sight of the tenderest undulations by counteracting all glare, without interfering with its crystalline luminousness. The delicate movements of the surface of fine sculpture are at the mercy of material. They are lost in the plaster cast, and are invisible in stone: hence the preference in critical Greek eyes for such compact surfaces as of ivory and metal. If in this respect marble fell at all short of these materials it was superior to them in many ways, by its easy workmanship, its adaptableness to any subject, and pre-eminently to the work of the encaustic painter, who remedied all defects, giving consistency to its surface, softening its rounded profiles, and harmonising it with surrounding colours. Encaustic painting was not necessarily colouring, but served as the preparation for it, and for protection of the surface when colours were not used. To write of *painting* statues might mislead a reader: the expression might have applied to archaic figures and reliefs, where

[1] Ἀγαλμάτων ἐγκαυσταὶ, χρυσωταὶ, καὶ βαφεῖς. Plutarch, *De Glor. Athen.* 6.

painted architecture, whether Greek or Gothic, required such treatment; but in all thought of the colouring of such sculpture as I now speak of, independent high-class work, the barest idea of paint as commonly understood must be at once dismissed, and in place of it must be conceived an art peculiar to itself, of utmost refinement of sight and handling. Its purpose was altogether subordinate; less with a view to any imitation of nature than of conventionally aiding materials to the more perfect display of the beauty that sculpture had itself already produced. Hence the intense refinement of it. It was a useful ornament, but would cease to be so if obtrusive or suggestive of a second idea apart from form. The arts of the "stainer" and of "encaustic" combined, whether on drapery or emblems, accessories or supports, or on the figure itself, had for their one sole purpose the perfect exhibition of the figure by the relief and contrasts that they afforded.

So in all ways colour, whether tenderly or powerfully used, was within the strict limits and province of the great art it served. It would marr rather than aid the effect of sculpture if it transgressed those limits. Sculpture is the highest and most difficult of the imitative arts; and they are rightly called imitative, from the artist's sheer necessity, having only Nature's models to follow; but imitation in art is an *intellectual, not a mechanical* process, a matter of translation; it is Nature's voice spoken by the artist's method; it is the realisation of impressions, that, in passing through the artist's mind, are affected by his character and motive *in the image that he gives to his idea.* The highest value of his work is in the moral aspect of it; the whole force of it depends on the unity of its ideal; and whether colour or no colour be used, it is so used or not, and only so to insure the completeness of its expression. Even if in such master works as the

Theseum or the Parthenon the nude parts of the pedimental sculpture had been tinted or stained flesh colour, this mere flat wash of colour as contrasted with the actual painting of flesh, as in a picture, with its fixed composition of light and shade, its countless gradations and broken tints, is a totally different matter; and it is impossible to believe that such men as Pheidias (himself a painter before he was a sculptor), or his chief encaustic artist Panænus, or at the Theseum, Myron, both painter and sculptor, could for an instant have transgressed the province of their arts, or have done more than to use a consistent local tint, whether such were warm, as some flesh tints would be, or merely with the mellowness of the olive complexions of the south; but, whatever it was, so modified as finest taste would suggest to harmonise the white marble with the richly-ornamented architecture, the painted mouldings and the deep shadows of the pediment above, and of the portico below. It was with the instinct of the artist that they acted; and, whatever was the course they pursued, they knew too well both what art and nature meant, to be guilty of the weak folly of making mock realities. The soft white Parian marble was as precious to the Greek as to us; but he used it with the independence of an artist's genius, colouring, toning, gilding, and otherwise adorning it or not to suit his purpose. He knew full well that the end of art was not to delude but to delight; the very thought of illusion would never cross his mind. His work was art; his mistress Nature, too revered for mimicry; but the bald marble might be too self-assertive, too obtrusive of its own material for his desired result. His purpose was to realise imagery, which haunted his imagination, not to glorify marble, and most certainly not to counterfeit flesh. His result would be a work of art, natural indeed, but ideal also;

to bring his conception of Nature's beauty to the hearts of other men; a work so schemed and executed, simple or complex, plain or coloured, but such as would leave all sense and thought unimpeded, by the mere technicalities of art, to range freely in the action and story of it, and to enjoy that motive poetry of it with which his own mind and imagination had been filled. The artist speaks only through his works, and Nature's forms are all he has to use; and it would be difficult to conceive a greater libel against her, who is the source and centre of all the real and the ideal both of art and life, than the mocking image of pretended truth, in the attempt to produce the thing without the life which is all that gives value to that thing's reality. The art of art is not to hide itself, but to hide its artifice. A work of art is not a pretence. A statue is a reality, but a reality of art; not as the rival of Nature's work, but the reflection of her spirit.

Colour is but one mode of an artist's expression. Doubtless the ideal of sculpture is the perfect beauty of abstract form; but expression is the life of it; without it art is dead; for what is art's action in its highest sense but the appeal of the living to the living? Even if death be its subject, it is the grandeur or the pathos of that death that makes the poetry of it beautiful, and the sculpture of it precious. Colour does not alter form,—but argument is out of place where Nature rules; and art has no logic for cold reason, but goes straight to the heart by the rhetoric of sympathy.

The "How and how much?" of colouring, of independent classical sculpture, must be ever a matter of uncertainty. The notices of ancient writers are vague; and time, accident, and atmosphere have done their worst, and have left us but little positive evidence, as compared with what remains on works of architecture. Nearly five centuries had passed over the master-

pieces of antiquity before such writers as Pausanias, Pliny, Strabo, and Lucian described their state. Still there is an ample accumulation of many scraps and kinds of testimony to justify the inference of how great a part colour played in all the master works of art's greatest days, and how thorough were the knowledge and the taste of their authors. As their grandest works of sculpture, the colossal figures in the temples of the gods, were enriched with every coloured material and every mode of coloured ornament that ingenuity could devise, the use of colour is implied on others standing near them, to save them from a contrast painfully obtrusive. In the Heroum at Olympia there were above twenty statues of gold and ivory, and such figures were the special subjects for the coloured ornamentation of jewelry and enamel. The heroic statues were commonly of bronze, sometimes gilt, sometimes of metal much alloyed, sometimes stained with bitumen: the marble statues were tinted by encaustic, the famous "circumlitio" being the process of its use. With these the temples within and without, the porticoes, the galleries of the market-places, the Lesche, the Agoræ, and the public walks, were ornamented, and such was the general taste for coloured and varied materials that statues of ivory and gold, exported by hundreds, became an important part of Athenian trade. Such was the proud magnificence to which victorious Athens had trained her people. The artist's mind was full of the romance and heroism of his own times; and his imagination, enriched with the myths, the poetry, and the traditions of his country's history, realised to the people the just mead of their own devotion. For us imagination alone can form a picture of it. No painted casts, no plaster models of temple fronts and groups of sculpture, even were Aphrodisius, Panænus, and Nicias called up to paint

them, could give the faintest idea of those glories of old art. Colour needs colour; and colour supports colour, and the material it adorns makes much of its beauty. No grouped or isolated illustrations could inspire the idea of what that reunion of the arts produced; nor reproduce that symphony of harmonious form and colour that the wealth and refinement of Greek cities realised, and Greek sun and atmosphere made possible.

Nature has taught and trained us all. It has endeared to us our sober scenery, our misty skies, and the gray moss and lichen on our storm-stained walls; but to them, that glorious flood of light that turned their distant glaciers into jewelry, that deep blue sea, those cliffs and sun-browned rocks that had trained their sight to the revelry of colours, had made such backgrounds for all that human hands could raise in front of them, that their architecture and sculpture would have been intolerable without some artifice to harmonise them with Nature. So colour was the note to which they were all attuned; and Pheidias and his friends let their artistic enthusiasm go free in the gold and vermilion of their sunny cornices, and in the vigorous contrasts and reliefs of their groups of sculpture.

The common reference that the opponents of colouring make to the authority of Lucian to prove the absence of all colour on the finest works of ancient sculpture, by citing the whiteness of Praxiteles's masterpiece, the Venus of Cnidos, appears to me to savour of a criticism inspired by an exaggeration or misconception of the use of colour, and indeed in some persons by a natural inaptitude or a temper of resolute antipathy. Lucian presents the subject in the form of an imaginary conversation, in which the speakers are engaged not so much in artistic criticism as in lauding the exquisite complexion of a beautiful lady. They compare it with

the finest known works of sculpture and painting, and to this statue in particular, concluding that marble is too white for it; and hence modern opinion has jumped to the result that all the finest marble sculpture of antiquity was left crude white from the master's hand. Then how about Praxiteles's opinion, which was diametrically the opposite of this? The idea of representing the natural effect of flesh in the colouring of statues, or even the broader treatment of washing a statue over with what is commonly understood as flesh tint, except in the necessary conventionality of architectural sculpture, would be an equal insult to human eyes and to Nature. I can, however, imagine an art-loving literary archæologist, but certainly not an artist, writing that he "meant by painting a statue, the employment of colours so as to give to the face and body the actual hues which they have in nature."[1] Praxiteles would have thought Nicias gone mad if he had written that. It is not to be wondered at that Lucian's conversation concludes that sculptured marble was too white for comparison with the flesh of that lady.[2] It is the misconception of the art of applying colour to sculpture that presses the argument, without

[1] Quatremère de Quincy, *Le Jupiter Olympien.*

[2] If Lucian's imaginary allusions to the Venus of Cnidos be properly estimated, it will be remembered that the statue was above 450 years old when he saw it, and that the colour used for such a tint as such a statue would have had, would have been very fugitive. The real colour would in all probability have been a *merely mellowing tint*, with which its encaustic would have been "variata." He does not mention colour or white, but describes the effect as λαμπροτης, which answers exactly to Pliny's word "nitescunt." If a *warm tint* were used on it, the colour would have been most probably prepared with vermilion and treated in the most delicate manner. Archaic statues were much prized in the time of Praxiteles for some pleasant or quaint associations, and these were painted all over with unmitigated vermilion; but even in that excess of colour, such was its quality that those statues had to be frequently repainted. Any other colour would have been stains, still more fugitive, or ocres uselessly opaque. Lucian's testimony as to the non-existence of colouring on that or any other sculpture contemporary with it, seems therefore to me worthless.

thought of circumstances or the limits of each art, that "proximity to naturalist representation marks the degrees of an art's perfection." It may do so as regards mechanical imitation, for perfect mechanism would make any number of copies the same, but no two out of twenty artists, worth their salt, would or could make their copies alike if acting independently, especially if they were studies from Nature, for a copy is the idea or impression of each individual mind reflected in his work, and there is none such in a mechanical copyist. An artist not merely sees but feels, and works as he feels. So in using colour, if condescending to the base trade of a wax portrait modeller, he would probably "represent nature" (!) better than any other man; but as a sculptor, putting out the whole energy of his artistic sense, the feeling which prompted his idea would be his guide, and colour would then become an abstract conception, totally irrespective of simple natural effect, and, if used at all, would be so, not as an element of representative art, but as an element of perfection to be moulded to his purpose, to enhance the expression of his work,—an imitation, indeed, if you will, both of form and colour, but the imitation of the ideal of Nature in his mind.

Parian marble was so tender in texture and hue that to use the word asperity, as a fault of its natural surface, would be an exaggeration; but works of art are not independent of surrounding circumstances, and the treatment of marble surfaces in sculpture by the ancients in some way or other, beyond the last touch of file or chisel, is indubitable; and in doing so, there could be no purpose but to modify them. In Lucian's conversation, the surface was not declared to be uncoloured, but only too white for human flesh. The Venus of Cnidos was said to be so, but that was all. White has a very wide range indeed of hues, short of

the tender life-blood-tint even of the fairest flesh. That statue was cited as an exquisite example, but a defect in the marble, marked by a dark spot on one of the legs, has been especially noticed as a proof that the statue was not "painted." Most true, indeed, it was not so, as this crude idea of "paint" implies, which no artist's mind would have conceived. The marble was marble still, not for its own exhibition of lime and crystals, but to serve its purpose; not mimic flesh, to delude and offend by vulgar trickery, but marble still, with unobtrusive surface, toned, veiled, and made beautiful as only art can make it. But as this was one of the master's finest works, of which he said those "pleased him most" that his young friend the encaustic painter Nicias had touched,[1] it is but a fair inference that this, his masterpiece, the Venus of Cnidos, was among that number that "pleased him most." That figure was the ideal of female beauty, and not in form only, but in tone and texture, all would have been done by such a master to make it perfect. The encaustic circumlitio, whether plain or "variata," but equally mellowing and transparent, would have exactly produced the desired effect, and the softness of its tint would have made refinement more refined. All was coloured round it. The open shrine in which it stood, was surrounded by all that cost and artifice of ornamental gardening could produce; and if upon the statue itself the mellow tint of the encaustic painter produced a blush that did but play into the fancy of the eyes, without pretending to reality, the marble would only have been softened by it, not disguised, and, by contrast, have been made only more beautifully white.

The negative evidence of the non-existence of

[1] "Dicebat Praxiteles interrogatus quæ maximé opera sua probasset in marboribus 'quibus Nicias manum admovisset,' tantum circumlitioni ejus tribuebat." Pliny, *N. H.* xxxv.

examples, or of any definite account of the artistic treatment of this class of sculpture, is not conclusive. The positive evidence of the finest works having been subject to the encaustic painter,[1] as those of Praxiteles, or worked in variously coloured materials as those of Pheidias, or decked with jewels and gold as was the Venus dei Medici, indicates sufficiently the direction of public taste of that age as guided by its greatest men. By piecing together the fragments of ancient and modern testimony, it seems to me inevitable to conclude that colour was very widely used in the finest sculpture of the Greeks, and that its general use prevented any effect of peculiarity and strangeness which its extreme rarity produces upon us. It may be impossible to say exactly where and how much, especially with respect to the actual tinting of the nude parts; but taking for granted the finest discrimination in its use, there is strong testimony for its artistic propriety. From what we know of the style in which ancient writers treat such subjects, a perfectly definite description of colours could not be expected. For instance, Plato's admiration of the local propriety of the colours used on painted statues leaves all detail to the imagination. Gilding, colours, and statue painting, are mentioned again and again by old authors, but almost always with poetic vagueness. Statues are said to have been sometimes painted with vermilion, but we know that that colour varies from the most offensive violence to the ground of the tenderest blush. The choice of ivory for the nude parts suggests the almost necessary use of a stain upon it,[2] as in the case of ornaments where such

[1] "Uti signa marmoria curantur." Vitruvius, vii. 9. Quoting from ancient Greek writers.

[2] Among the Athenian artists of the time of Pericles, Plutarch mentions ἐλέφαντος ζωγράφοι, painters of ivory, or painters from life on ivory. Ivory was treated with great independence by the ancients, who, careless of its beautiful colour, very commonly used it as a vehicle for other colours.

treatment was universal; but in the use of it for the nude parts of statues, it was necessary to overcome the unbecoming blots and tints of its inlaid pieces, or its liability to turn yellow. But *realistic imitation* of flesh is nowhere specified, nor are there any remains of any attempt at flesh-tint, such as is generally understood by that word, except on statuettes and figures in coloured terra-cotta; but ivory of itself approached so near to the tone and texture of flesh, that anything done to it by the artist would have been inevitably in the direction of greater likeness, however much or little he modified his tints of yellow, olive, red, or brown; so that from all we naturally infer, and from what we gather by the facts of special "ivory painters" being employed, or by Plato's expressed admiration of the "appropriateness" of the colouring of statues, or from the use of jewelry to give brightness to the eyes, and the entirely naturalistic effect of the enamel-embroidered drapery and of the constructive materials, it is inevitable to conclude that if in any form of sculpture realistic effect was the result of its ornament, it was in those colossal statues of ivory and gold. But this was contrary to the great sculptor's wish. Pheidias had urged to the utmost his preference for marble; but he was overruled, and the employment of ivory was forced upon him by the popular will; and every touch that degraded the ideal to the level of imitative reality was executed by other hands than his.

In the writings of numerous travellers and artists, both English and foreign, early in this century, we

In several places Homer mentions it, as in *Iliad*, IV. v. 141, where he describes the ornaments of purple stained ivory of the harness. The plaques of ivory from Assyria and Egypt are commonly so carved for the purpose of inlaid coloured enamel, that not half the ivory surface is left. The mediæval ivories were also frequently painted, just as the ancient Greeks had treated their marble architectural sculpture, painting strong flat backgrounds, gilding all ornaments, and colouring forcibly the linings of draperies and accessories.

have the clear evidence of eye-witnesses of the colouring of the finest marble: as Professor Cockerell writes of the Parian marble sculpture of the Theseum, "The Minerva, the central figure of the Western Pediment, was painted with chequers of beads; the Ægis was painted all over, with gilded scales, etc.;" and Mr. Dodwell, writing in 1813, says of the marble figures of the Pediment of Ægina, "The statues were all painted, the colours are still visible;" and of the Theseum, he writes (in 1801-6), "the armour and the accessories have been gilt to represent gold or bronze; the drapery is generally green, blue, or red, the favourite colours of the Greeks. The scene took place in the open air, so the ground is painted blue."[1] And thus many others have written about other places and other sculpture, of which these are but specimens; and although such notices apply exclusively to temple statues and reliefs on temple walls, they indicate at least the general principle how architectural sculpture was treated in other buildings, for colour and gold was not peculiar to temple architecture; but the statues in the

[1] The references to authorities on the subject of sculptural and architectural colouring are too lengthy and numerous for quotation. Travellers and archæologists from most countries in Europe have contributed to them. The following are some of the most easily accessible and worthy of study:—Of ancient authors Pausanias, Strabo, Lucian, Pliny, Vitruvius, Callistratus's *Descrip. Stat.*, Plutarch's *De Glor. Athen.* Of modern date Mr. Dodwell's *Travels in Greece*, Mr. Clarke's ditto, Professor Cockerell's *Ægina and Bassæ*, Col. Leake's *Topography of Athens*, Stuart's *Athens*, Kennard's edition of ditto, Mr. Donaldson's Supplement to ditto, Sir C. Fellows's *Lycia*, Faulkener's *Dædalus* and *Museum of Classical Antiquities*, Mr. Penrose's *Principles of Athen. Arch. and Polychromy*, with coloured illustrations, R. Rochette's *Peintures Antiques* and *Lectures on Ancient Art*, Letronne's *Lettres d'un Antiquaire*, etc., Millin's *Monuments Inédits*, Quatremère de Quincy's *Jupiter Olymp.*, *Report of the French Expedition to the Morea*, *Report of German Expedition to Olympia*, Brönsted's *Voyage en Grèce*, Weigmann's *Die Malerei der Alten*, Kugler's *Ueber die Polychromie*, Hittorff's *Temple d'Empédocle*, Stackelberg's *Apollo Tempel zu Bassæ*, Winckelman's *Reflections on Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks*, Labrouste's *Restitution des Temples de Pæstum*, for the École des Beaux Arts, and plates.

Propylææ, the Agoræ, and Leschæ, and all such public buildings, would be subject to a treatment at least in some degree similar to those on the great models of Greek architecture. Isolated statues would be treated independently, but the most independent of them were always associated with those public places, and were usually placed within them or in their niches, or on pedestals in front of them; and such statues, thus placed, embrace the greatest masterpieces of antiquity. The accounts we have of the discovery of numerous statues in many places, assert the vividness of their original colouring when first unearthed, but that upon exposure it faded away at once.[1] If then such was the case with the powerful colours of their drapery and accessories, how much more would this effect of time and exposure be evident on the tender encaustic painting of their limbs; a painting that was free from opacity, and, by all that we can judge, amounted, in independent sculpture, to no more than a transparent glaze and polish through which the crystalline beauty of the marble would show its toned whiteness, as silver does in translucent enamels, and as Pliny says, after describing the encaustic process, "Sicut et marmora nitescunt." But for our eyes nothing has been spared; those statues, whether independent or architectural, were at first well cleaned upon their discovery, then, on arrival at their destinations, well soaped for taking plaster casts, then chemically washed to get rid of the soap (as the Elgin marbles and others in the British Museum were treated)—and at last presented to us

[1] Mr. Newton, in a letter addressed to Mr. Faulkener, and quoted at length in his interesting volume *Dædalus*, referring to the colouring on the sculpture found at Halicarnassus, of which the finest extant specimens are now in the British Museum, writes thus of the colours which he found on many parts both of the architecture and statues, "I saw them fade away in the sunlight like a ghost." Professor Cockerell writes of the colours on the statues at Ægina, "They were discovered in all their original vividness, which quickly disappeared on exposure."

bare marble; and people think that they were ever bare, from which the old encaustic painter's work has thus been ruthlessly stripped, and not a blush of it remains. To form our judgment of the practice and effect of that art, granted that but little more than written evidence and inference remains, but it is inference not vainly based on fancy, but on all that we know too well of the conditions under which the arts flourished together in those days, to need further reference.

ESSAY V—*Continued*

THE MINISTRY OF COLOUR TO SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE

PART II—ARCHITECTURAL WALL PAINTING

COLOUR as an element of architectural effect was in the earlier years of this century generally regarded as a novelty. The traditions of classic art were lost or in abeyance; the colouring of Christian buildings had been all but exclusively internal; the systems of wall painting were, however, being studied afresh, aroused to interest by the discoveries in Greece and at Pompeii, and thus, whether for within or for without, the idea of colour was dawning as a new light. The former generation had been educated in a purism which kept the arts estranged. The painter, the sculptor, and the architect knew little or nothing of each other's arts. The idea of modulating them into one great rhythm was not dreamed of, and they cared for them as little as they knew. The public cared for none of those things, and the few who were spared from politics, commerce, or fighting, received as gospel the common art-tradition that colour was the province of pictures, and that sculpture and architecture were sacred alone to the ideal of abstract form. Such was the art religion of the day: all else was sacrilege; and there was much truth in it,—so much so, indeed, that with all our

emancipation and liberty of conscience in such matters, we must acknowledge much in it to revere and to admire, for its foundation was a sound one, and lay in an ideal of purity, in a recognition of the excellence of abstract beauty, and in that modesty of art which is implied by singleness of purpose.

The employment of colour with architecture in the times of its perfection is now too generally admitted to need proof. The beauty of nude and colourless forms may be very great, but they need to be of the highest art to bear the trial of such nude exposure. The nude beauty of uncoloured architecture is certainly of the most pure and abstract kind. Architecture is an intellectual creation, but as such it is too artificial, too abstract, too exclusive of all that is common to external Nature to command all hearts. There is a note wanting in its scale. One touch might bring the refinement of its calculated symmetry into a closer harmony with external Nature, and the abstractions of human genius into nearer accord with the feelings of human nature, and that is the touch of colour.

A thing of colour is a thing of life. A colourless thing in Nature, if there be such, savours more of death than life. In art a colourless thing is but a passionless abstraction. It may be in both pure and lovely, even though the idea of life may have no part with it. But, as life is better than death, so are things that represent it; and, as Nature without colour is inconceivable, so art without colour is incomplete.

The colouring by the ancients, whether by their wall paintings within or the polychrome of their sculpture and architecture without, was as contemporaneous with their building as each case allowed. The example of an uncoloured temple or public building as being exceptional or indicating its unfinished condition, was well illustrated in the story told by Herodotus of the

reply given to the Siphnians, who in much anxiety had consulted the Pythian oracle, and received this many-coloured answer: "When the Prytaneia in Siphnos shall be white, and the Agora white-fronted, then there is need of a prudent man to guard against a wooden troop and a crimson herald." They were white at that time, being scarcely completed, and so they remained, for the "prudent man" did not appear in time to save the people from the ruin that immediately befell them by the invasion of the Samians. Those buildings were of Parian marble. The oracle had specified their whiteness as a *peculiarity*.

In such magnificent beauty as in the works of the architect Ictinus and the sculptor Pheidias, in their full glory of mingled natural and artificial colouring, we hear no regrets of the great artists themselves, nor complaints of their contemporaries, that colour interfered with the beauty of their forms. In their days was realised that power of artistic combination by which colour could be felt as pure and beautiful in art as it was in nature. In those days the grandeur and the beauty of form, as represented by the highest ideal of architecture and of sculpture, could be and was recognised no more in the tender hue of the Venus of Cnidos than in the splendour of the Minerva of the Parthenon; no more in the white shafts and cornices of Siphnos than in the coloured glories of Athens and Olympia. No, in those days, to which we turn with reverence for the classic education of art as for the classic education of its literature, we hear nothing of such bald objections, which seem only to imply either weakness of sense or poverty of imagination. The ideal of beauty in form is rightly loved for its purity, but I am convinced that, as in ancient days, so too in our own, a larger-hearted and not less pure-minded perception of its excellence will find no hindrance in

its association with the equally pure element of colour, if only rightly used, but rather will love the loveliness of colour all the more, which only makes the ideal form more lovely still, as it has nature for its universal guide and human sympathies for its universal exponent.

When the sculptor, the painter, and the architect thus worked together, the spirit of the age which had brought their arts into life and action inspired them alike; but in tracing the progress of their arts' development it has been too common to treat each stage of it with comparative indifference, as but a passing phase of its condition, and, with the view directed only to the ultimate result, to ignore the principles which at each period prevailed. Such principles may, indeed, have been inchoate and perhaps unheeded, but they definitely marked the turnings of the road that led to their perfection; and, as such, each turn exhibited an experiment, at the time invaluable, but lost sight of in the general halo of their advance. A spirit of independence was perhaps inevitable, as each art developed, and was regretable only in its excess, when their unity was impaired by indifference and self-assertion. In earlier days such discord did not exist. A definite style, no matter of what age, was the expression of a definite idea; it was perfected by the union of many arts, and the more perfect their union, the more perfect was the expression of that idea. Destroy that union and you destroy the very means of its expression, for the whole charm of style lay in the purity and clearness of its voice as the articulate expression of individual character.

But in modern times, since the beginning of the fifteenth century, the union of painting with architecture has been greatly impaired by the growth, and at last by the excess of independence. The development of the painter's art led to the development of one ex-

clusive phase of it, that of pictorial effect. But the true greatness of the art consists rather in the greatness of its adaptability, in its width and power to respond to the most opposite demands. But now it is restricted to one only phase, one and one only is supposed compatible or proper to its highest aims, that whether it be applied within the limits of a gold frame, or be spread over some great surface, needed for the repose and grandeur of architectural effect, yet still that the same ever-repeated phase of *picture* should prevail. It is strange that artists should fail to recognise the weakness of this restriction, that their grand art should manifest such poverty of invention and resource that, under conditions so opposite, it should still remain the same.

The modern painter has made himself a slave to the mere technicalities of naturalistic and pictorial composition, but the greatness of his art lies in *design*, not in the mere technicalities of linear or atmospheric relief. But art was in this way narrowed centuries ago, even by those who in the great days of its revival glorified it by their genius. Painting was reduced to illusive pictorial effect, drawn in within one narrow code of practice. The picture, the altar-piece, the window, and the wall, the fresco and the mosaic, were all brought within the category of the same rigid table of art laws; and why? because the artists were in bondage to one view or principle, and had ignored the varying conditions of art in its place, its purpose, and its materials; and popular opinion, with its eyes half closed, was miseducated by its masters.

To the honour of English art, there have been two great spirits who broke loose from the track of commonplace and asserted in practice the true theory of design, both in decorative and in the highest order of illustrative art, Wedgwood and Flaxman.

Linear and atmospheric perspective are, of course, among the primary essentials of an artist's education, but as accomplishments they rank with his alphabet and spelling-book. In dealing with them successfully on a scale and under circumstances where a modification of them is necessary, lies an artist's skill. For instance, in a long wall painting, which a spectator would necessarily move about to see, such modification is inevitable; several points of sight must be taken; but such dealing with linear perspective is a very different thing from ignorant or wilful outrage of it. Subjects may be so treated as to render such modification possible and agreeable, and composition may be so arranged as wellnigh to cloak the effects of perspective. The foreshortening which is the perspective in figure-drawing is of course an absolute necessity and inviolable, but that is an effect of *local* as distinct from *pictorial* and *general* perspective, and in no way interferes with the restrictions that are necessary in some conditions of wall painting. I know that such restrictions do cause difficulty to those who will not or cannot embrace the idea and principle they involve. The easy freedom of ordinary picture painting is gone. A disciplined and dignified simplicity is imposed on the artist, a simplicity that concentrates his mental conception of a subject and checks his hand, but the result may be all the nobler for this discipline.

The design, the composition, the colour, and all that in the unfettered freedom of pictorial effect were helped by technical convenience, or hidden and screened, shirked or scamped by artistic ingenuity, are now laid bare and open to all eyes, and must be met and mastered. The sculpturesque simplicity of ultimate effect demands his highest attainments. The strain calls out powers hitherto unbidden. The rigour of the discipline deepens and matures his study, and, if genius

be there, his work is grander for the victory he has gained, and the loss of minor effects is more than compensated by the perfection of the greater and nobler elements of his art, form, proportion, and equilibrium.

Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel, and Raphael in the Stanze, painted on walls with full and free pictorial effect, and *rightly*, because in both cases *no architectural obligations* were in their way. Raphael then painted upon the mere walls of rooms, and what architectural forms were there, were merely decorative and tantamount to picture frames. In the Sistine Chapel there are no forms of architectural construction to falsify, so the artist was free. The whole is painted; the whole interior is *a scene* of architecture, sculpture, frames, and pictures; an interior of the extremest conventionality, that must be accepted in honour of the splendid genius displayed in it. It falsifies and violates no constructive architecture. It is a work of thorough and consistent artifice, and clashes with no principle that I advocate.

It would be entirely to misunderstand my purpose if it were supposed that I could possibly underrate the merits of pictorial composition and all those splendid accomplishments which lead to its perfection. It would be worse than absurd to suppose that my advocacy of a distinctly architectural treatment of painted subjects should apply to all occasions of wall painting, as though such as adorn the open spaces of the walls of public buildings, where incidents of national or local history are displayed, such paintings should be deprived of more than half their interest by denying them their scenic completeness and the charm of natural effects. What would the ancient walls of the libreria at Siena be if Pinturicchio's historic works were deprived of all the vivid interest in the stories completed in their

backgrounds, or those by Herbert and Maclise in the modern palace of Westminster? All such are too precious for present and future record and enjoyment to be curtailed of a tittle of their value by submission to severe or conventional principles. But I am writing of a totally different matter and of a different occasion. I desire only to press the duty of the painter to accept the obligations of architectural constructive effect, and to curb artistic licence, where the mere A B C of atmosphere and perspective are displayed as merits, where indeed they exhibit only the artist's limited perception and poverty of resource, and mar the beauty of a sister art.

Let picture painting be as free as the air it imitates, but architectural wall painting is bound by the respect that one art owes to another. In the former, the effect of it should be the annihilation of surface,—in the latter, its emphasis.

By all that we can learn from the relics of ancient monuments and the records of ancient literature, we find that everywhere, when those arts were combined without mutual injury, a system, even if it cannot be dignified as a principle, was implicitly followed, and, purposely or by intuition, the artists worked with architecture without stultifying it, and produced works magnificent in their consistency.

If we reach back to long past times for precedents that would command respect, we may have to pass over centuries in which the true principles of monumental wall painting were unbroken, but where, as in the waning art of Rome and Byzantium or the waking art of the Christian middle ages, the art itself was too faulty or incomplete in other ways to be accepted as authority. The crude and lifeless productions of the Byzantine school, such as those which in painting or mosaic cover the walls and cupolas of

Constantinople, Ravenna, Salonica, and Trebizond, were based on the traditions of antiquity. Their isolated groups and single figures were composed, in relation to each other, on a system which they had not invented, but which, inherited and perpetuated by them, feebly and sometimes painfully, did nevertheless in their way represent the true architectonic ideal of their great ancestors. When the archæologist Pausanias describes the chest of Cypselus he describes a system of composing a series of subjects upon one surface which has prevailed for centuries before and since, from the wall paintings and coloured reliefs of Egypt and Assyria to the sculpture, the paintings, and ivory carvings of the Christian middle ages. And when he and others write of the great wall paintings of the days of Pericles, their descriptions picture to our imagination systems of composition conceived in the same manner. Such is the idea we form of the great works of Micon in the cella of the Theseum, which he covered with the battle groups of Centaurs and Lapithæ, Greeks and Amazons. So also were those of Polygnotus at Thespiæ, and his vast works which covered the walls of the Lesche at Delphi with historic scenes of the fall of Troy and the fabled visit of Ulysses to Tiresias in Hades, with their many groups and subjects arranged in succession and above or below each other. It was thus that Pheidias in his younger days must have painted the Olympion at Athens, and thus his nephew Panænus covered with groups of fighting Amazons the shield of Minerva in her temple at Elis and the architectural spaces round the great Jupiter of Olympia; thus too must Pausias have painted when he restored the works of Polygnotus on the injured walls of Thespiæ. These were the days of consummate genius, when principles were worked out and fixed that have prevailed, and in art must prevail for ever, where per-

fect reason and perfect imagination combine their equal powers which genius alone can sway.

The feeble Byzantines, the Christian mosaicists, and the Gothic wall painters only followed on the lines which had reached them through dark and evil times from the finest art-schools of antiquity, for the golden thread of artistic sympathy which bound together those true but unequal friends has never been broken. The fifth century B.C. was the great classic building age, and architecture then ruled the arts and inspired the sculptor and painter with its ideal of consummate dignity. We have but the relics of their arts in ruined fanes and broken statues, in the copies, or at least the influence of their works in the imagery of their painted pottery, but even with these we have enough, by careful inference, to realise in imagination the grandeur of their genius.

There were two distinct systems of painting by the Greeks, one on panels, the other on walls. With the first we have nothing to do here, for they were independent pictures, free from all architectural conditions, and usually let into walls, framed or hung upon them. Wall painting was essentially the art of the great building age; grand, heroic, monumental. Panel pictures were produced equally with their wall paintings by the great masters of the age, but were essentially the development of a later time and a more delicate technicality, the work of independent genius supplying the costliest votive offerings of the temples and the gems of public and private property.

It would be an offence to the works of those great wall painters of Elis, Athens, Thespiæ, and Delphi to draw from the designs of the vase painters, refined and beautiful as they often were, a further comparison with them than that which a weaker art may suggest of a greater, viz. the broad ideal of its conditions. But that

much we certainly may draw, for it is impossible to account for the combination of such magnificence of idea and composition with such frequently weak and faulty handling as those vases present, otherwise than by attributing their derivation to the works of the great masters of their age. If therefore from them we deduce the impression that those master-works were characterised by the dignity of sculpturesque self-restraint, as distinguished from the freedom of the picturesque, we shall be forming a just idea of them, for all other available testimony confirms it, from traditional description, from eye-witnesses, from models of design in contemporary sculpture, from the bas-reliefs of the Heroum of Zanthus to the friezes of Pheigalia, from the pictures on the prize Lechithoi of Athens, and from the far-reaching influence of their characteristic conditions, that can be traced back to them from the walls of Pompeii and the decorative paintings of Rome.

The Greek, the Rhodian, and the so-called Etruscan vases, which are painted only in outline, or admitting rarely the introduction of white and gold,[1] afford but an imperfect idea of the modelling and effect of the great compositions from which they are derived, except in the examples of the Athenian Lechithoi, which retain fragments of the richest colours, and from them may be formed a fair conception of the splendour of the old Greek wall painting. An admirable specimen of this kind of composition is seen on a Lechithos in the British Museum, on which is painted the group of Orestes, Electra, and Iphigenia at the tomb of Agamemnon. It is a perfect wall painting; the figures are exquisitely drawn, the colouring is intense, the

[1] One of the finest compositions of this kind is that of the surprise of Thetis by Peleus on the Cameirus vase, in the British Museum, on which Eros is painted white with gold and blue-enamelled wings, and the figure of Thetis is pure white.

composition is entirely free from pictorial relief, the background is a mere architectural indication, and the unoccupied space above is a flat tint of uniform blue.

We are, therefore, justified by these various styles of vase painting in forming a definite idea of the essentially architectonic character of the great works from which they have drawn their motives, corroborated as they are by contemporary bas-reliefs which represent the pictorial element of sculpture, and to form, at the same time, a high estimate of their artistic merits, confirmed as it is by the admiration which the great originals universally obtained; for, taking Polygnotus as a representative of the age and style, the art must have been of a noble kind that could have drawn forth such praises as those of Aristotle, who attributed to him the highest excellencies of both technical and moral beauty, or such as those of the critical Lucian, who ranked him among the best of Greek colourists.

The result was a style which on all accounts demanded the highest artistic powers, unaided, as it was in later and pre-eminently in modern art, by the accessories of elaborate backgrounds. Landscape painting, as a distinct art, had no existence in that age; nor even, so far as it is possible to ascertain, was it ever developed on naturalistic principles by the Greeks. The perspective necessary for it was not known till a later age; for that which has been attributed to the architect and scene-painter Agatharcus, and described by Democritus and Vitruvius from his writings, amounted only to the elements of linear effects. Historical and mythological subjects and athletic national pursuits engrossed public attention; and where out-of-door life in such a country and climate was the habit of the people, such art as that of landscape painting was not needed to fill up any void left by the beautiful Nature around them.

The examples of pictures saved from the ruins of Pompeii and Rome, which savour most of ancient Greek tradition, bear evidence, in contrast with the complex and realistic naturalism of modern art, how simple, symbolic, and conventional was the treatment of all backgrounds by the ancient classic school. The late Pompeian and Roman paintings of the time of the empire,[1] and such as, later still, the genre-painter Ludius had influenced, belong to a quasi-modern school of the picturesque, having lost all the dignity which characterised the Greek school. Such are the wall paintings of the house of the Empress Livia, which represent *panel-pictures* with all the attempt at pictorial effect common to that period, exhibiting the utmost known of atmospheric relief, as in the background to the group of Io, Mercury, and Argos, with their landscape of mist and mountain; or the scene through an imaginary window, where the street and houses are drawn in such perspective as no child could now be guilty of. But the panels to which I refer as

[1] A very illustrative series of pictures of this kind may be studied in Bartoli's two volumes, *Receuil de Peintures Antiques*, 1783, and in the volumes of the Museo Borbonico, and R. Rochette's *Peintures Antiques Inedites*. In some of these the landscape occupies the greater part of the scene, but without any definite principles of composition, scattered and ill drawn, with here and there imperfect effects of atmospheric perspective, and, where buildings are introduced about the scene, each is drawn with a linear perspective of its own, and even then without any approach to definite rule, the result being exceedingly crude and awkward.

Landscape painting, as a distinct art, is that of modern times and northern nations. Of the landscape scenery of the Greek theatres nothing is clearly known but that special places were indicated in them, and that in Greek pictures particular objects were admirably illustrated; but the distinct selection of natural scenery and effects, as the sole purpose of pictorial illustration, was an art springing from sympathies which as yet were immature, and, though attempted here and there, as in the spirited little mosaic landscape (of uncertain date) among the Roman and Pompeian pictures in the British Museum, nothing in antiquity approaches to landscape of nature and imagination worked into a high class of fine art, as we know it in the various styles of Claude and Poussin, Both and Berghem, Gainsborough and Turner.

thoroughly Greek in the evident tradition of their art, have their backgrounds composed with a studied simplicity, as though to avoid all possible disturbance of the interest concentrated in the actors of the scene. Such is the case in that fine mosaic picture at Naples, the choregium of the Casa del Poeta tragico, where several groups of actors are seen rehearsing their parts, to which the background is no more than a level colour with two or three Ionic shafts against it, and festoons of wreaths and ribands hanging from them. Such also is the spirited scene of the Pompeian wall painting representing the discovery of Achilles by Ulysses in the palace of Lycomedes, where the figures occupy almost the entire space, the rest being a portico of simple architectural character of columns and wreaths with the least possible relief. Thus many others have no more than backgrounds of drapery or plain colour, as is the case in the well-known panel of the Nozze Aldebrandine, representing the marriage of Thetis and Peleus, with attendant Muses and other figures, with a plain wall behind them and a flat tint of blue above it.

Thus, with these examples as a centre, if we look back to the past and forward to our own age, from the greatest works of antiquity, from the walls of Assyria and Ægypt, to the traditions of Greek art in the days of its perfection, the tombs of Etruria and the walls of Pompeii, the great mosaics of the east and west, the paintings of the early Christian times, and the frescoes of their development, present to us a system and a sense of art in one continuous stream of common feeling as painting allied to architecture in harmony and completeness. If I urge the consideration of this more architectonic type of this great art, I do so only where the conditions either recommend or demand it, and with a view rather to enlarge its sphere than to

restrict it. The architectural character of a building may demand from the painter some adaptation of style to harmonise his art to that upon which he works, but such need entail no return to palpable errors in technicality nor to archaism of faulty drawing or bad composition. No rules or definitions, but only the feeling and discretion of the artist can guide him in such treatment. I am advocating a principle which involves no return to the errors of the past, and certainly to no abnegation of any superior knowledge of our own ; but I certainly do advocate the practice of painting in a wider sense of its powers than is commonly found among us now. I look to it to harmonise itself to whatever it may be associated with, and whatever be its style. I look to that union of the arts rather as their espousal than their vassalage. If in architectonic painting the art were denied some of its common resources, it would be but to draw out and elevate the rest. Design need lose nothing of dramatic expression, figures need lose nothing of their vigour or refinement. Art would rather gain by its opportunities. Pictorial effects and accessories are only too often the means of escape from some crucial difficulty of composition. But where these find no place, and all resource for artistic indolence or cloak for inability is cut away, a painter is put upon his mettle ; his design must be more matured, his composition more studied, and his whole art thus necessarily raised to a higher standard. It would be no ill day for our arts if there were anything thus pressing upon them to force them upwards.

But, to conclude, monumental art is, of all others, the highest in its aim. Its condition of success is that the resources of all the arts which compose it be brought into unison. The success of former ages was the result of that unison in which the whole chorus of

the arts joined. It is the modern self-assertion of the individual that renders success in monumental art well-nigh impossible. Let each art be free as air, and revel in its own powers *when it is alone and uncontrolled, but then, and only then.* In either case the painter's triumph may be complete. Let him paint as the spirit moves him, and, with all the freedom of independence, do all that natural effect or picturesque incident may inspire. But then, associate his art, in full swing of its liberty, with the calmer dignity of architectural design, and the result is this—both mind and eye are offended, he has made all light which the architect had purposely left massive, bold, and broad; he has placed the two arts in direct antagonism; he has stultified the architecture and reversed every condition of its construction and equilibrium, opening that which should be closed, lightening that which should be heavy, and leaving weighty masses of masonry without apparent support; he has turned cupolas into thin air, thick walls into scenes of aerial perspective, and has left massive arches to carry the clouds.

But the great works of other times have given us the precedents and principles to attain results of success similar to their own. Individual taste may nowadays revel in vanity and self-assertion, but great artists of the greatest days did otherwise. I am confident that in conjunction with architecture all arts are raised at once to their highest sphere. Architecture is the most conventional of all arts, the creature of thought most abstract and refined; and with it others can find companionship complete and sympathetic only in their purest and noblest character, where all power is concentrated to symbolise and suggest rather than to realise, to address imagination rather than to satisfy curiosity.

The title of an architect is that of the "chief of

artists," and the consummation of his genius is in the union of all arts for the perfection of that which is especially his own; for, as gold is among colours, so is architecture among the arts; it is the centre toward which they are all attracted by mutual regard and interest, and round which, as in natural relationship, they group their various attributes; with all their skill and all their poetry making architecture itself completely beautiful, at once the home and the glory of them all.

ESSAY VI

MOSAIC

PART I—ANCIENT

IT would be easier to imagine than to certify the origin of mosaic. Happy accident has been the source of most of our arts and ingenuities, and to that the origin of mosaic may be safely consigned. It was a conviction rather than an invention. A dozen people in the depths of antiquity may have hit upon it independently and at the same time, and as many more since who had never heard of them. In its rudest form[1] pebbles set together before a doorstep was a natural device for comfort, and suggested the orderly arrangement of their sizes and colours into a pattern as a natural device for pleasure; and the next door neighbours, pleased with the good sense of the whole thing, adopted it; and others, whose conviction as to its use and pleasantness brought it into fashion, developed it into the character of a decorative art.

There is no art about the early history of which so little is known as this: and it is not a little remarkable

[1] Dr. Schliemann in his *Troja*, 1884, pp. 53, 54, writes thus:—"We found a house-floor of large *white pebbles*, which extended to the very wall on the north side, and of which a large part may still be seen. This singular house-floor must necessarily have belonged to one of the first buildings of the second inhabitants here." This "second city" was "Troy proper," "The Ilios of Homeric legend."—Title, chap. iii.

that, such being the case, there is none to the various forms of which such a multitude of names have been given. It would be useless to give a catalogue of them here; but it may be said that some appear to be common-sense definitions, such as the Greek name "lithostratos,"[1] for a pavement, and "psephosis" for tessellation generally, the Latin "opus tessellatum," etc.; some names are fanciful, such as the "opus vemiculatum," so called from the lines of its tesseræ undulating like the coils of worms; one is complimentary, viz. the "opus Alexandrinum," said to have been so called from its inventor the Emperor Alexander Severus.[2] Purple and green marbles were imported from Alexandria, and during that emperor's reign some ingenious mosaicist appears to have hit upon a very effective combination of them, which the emperor ("instituit") was pleased to "appoint" for use in his palace. Hence its invention and its name might for flattery's sake have been attributed to the emperor, as is affirmed, but for every other sake to Alexandria, whence its materials came. Some names for it are technical, such as "opus figlinum," *i.e.* of the nature of pottery; some might be relegated to a comedy of errors like the derivation of the word "musiva" or "musæva" from the name of the mythic poet Musæus; or the idea of the learned commentator on Theophilus, who suggests that "mosaic" comes from "mosque," because it is so commonly found in that kind of building.[3] A mediæval writer

[1] This word is properly an adjective, the word "edaphos" being understood, and forming the complete description of a ground or "floor spread with stones." Psephosis mosaic-work, from *psephos*, a pebble or tessera.

[2] "Alexandrinum opus de duobus marmoribus, hoc est de Porphyretico et Lacedemonio, primus instituit: palacio exornato hoc genere marmorandi."—Lampridius, *Life of Alex. Sev.*

"Alexandrina marmora Numidicis crustis distincta sunt . . . in picturæ modum variata."—Seneca, *Epist.* 86.

[3] Hendrie, p. 37 of preface.

disposes of the difficulty without hesitation by his comprehensive description of it as "materia musica";[1] but long before his time the same idea had struck the Emperor Theophilus, who early in the ninth century added to his palace at Constantinople, in which the empress's apartment was so beautifully ornamented with mosaic, that in consequence of the rhythm and harmony of its colouring he called it the embodiment of music (Μουσικὸς). Indeed the origin of the word "mosaic" has been the subject of such speculation and controversy as leaves one at the end in a vague condition of mind between the ornamentation of museums and the company of the Muses; but be the origin of it what it may, its heterogeneous application has turned its confused etymology into worse confusion by dignifying with its name any and every kind of inlaid materials, from the grand pavement of the Battle of Issus to the picture of the Madonna made of inlaid flowers by Italians at a village festa.[2]

Nor are the frequent references to its earliest use much more satisfactory. It is vaguely stated that "the Chinese practised it from high antiquity"—a contingency of considerable probability, but without a single authority or illustration being offered of an art apparently so well suited to a people of great ingenuity, and simply taken for granted successively by one writer from another. Ornamental inlaid porcelain must not be confounded with mosaic; and such was the only approach to it known in China, as in the Tower of

[1] Ciampini, vol. i. p. 78—"Nec desunt qui Musivum aut Mosivum à Græco verbo μουσεῖον, id est *Musico Cantu* deducant," a derivation expressive of the same idea.

[2] Constantine Porphyrogenitus (905-959), describing the luxury and extravagance of the Byzantine Court, mentions the habit of wearing mosaics as ornaments of dress; and he adds that ψήφωσις, the proper word for tessellated work, did not suffice to express the minuteness of those ornaments, so the words μουσεῖον, μουσαῖον, μουσειώμα, and μουζακιον, were invented for it.

Nankin. That "porcelain pagoda" has been thus described as having "its outer face covered with slabs of glazed porcelain of various colours, principally green, red, yellow, and white: the body of the edifice is of brick."[1] It is indeed impossible to quote any author to the effect that mosaic was never practised by the Chinese; but the absence of any notice of it by the closest observers of the arts, antiquities, trades, and habits of that people, is at least negative evidence against it. Among the lists given of Chinese arts and manufactures mosaic is never mentioned. In the places most likely for it, it is not referred to, such as in describing the Imperial Academy, a great public hall at Pekin, which is known as "the court of gems," no allusion is made to it; nor in the famous apartment or guest-room in the empress's palace known as "the flowery wall" is any reference made to anything of the nature of mosaic on its walls or floor. In Chinese paintings and ornamental work no suggestion of mosaic is afforded, except in that of carpenter-work, marquetry of cabinets and boxes with pieces of mother-of-pearl inlaid upon their carved surfaces. This kind of work on a large scale is the special manufacture at Ningpo, where furniture inlaid with light and dark woods is produced, ornamented with a marquetry of figures, animals, and conventional patterns,—a Chinese edition of the Italian intarsiatura of the sixteenth and the French of the seventeenth centuries. Their ancient enamels have often the effect of most refined mosaics, but they belong to a totally different art. Beside these, their inlaying on metal and other materials is a beautiful art, in which precious stones of various colours, sometimes carved in projection, make part of the design; but it is not mosaic. In the Yuen-Ming-Yuen, or summer palace of Pekin, there was no mosaic; its

[1] *The Middle Kingdom*, by S. Wells Williams, vol. i. p. 83.

principal hall was "paved with slabs of gray marble laid chequerwise."[1] "Tiles, glazed blue and green for roofs of temples, and yellow for palaces, are made of stoneware, but the common flooring tiles are burned from brick clay."[2] Geometrical patterns, which of themselves suggest a mosaic treatment, are the rarest elements of Chinese ornament, which has all but invariably curved or flowing outlines. The pattern which has the least of this character is an occasional band or border resembling the Greek fret. In the numerous works illustrating Chinese art nothing of mosaic is found beyond the subsidiary work of inlaid wooden furniture. The floors of public edifices, ancient or modern, are commonly laid with alternate squares of contrasted marble, and in others of tiles, earth, or cement. If wall or pavement mosaic exists in China it is at least unknown to the rest of the world; and if it ever existed it must have been no more than what an accidental variety is in the realm of botany, a "sport" that did not repeat itself. From Marco Polo in the thirteenth to the latest traveller in the nineteenth century no reference is made to the subject, beyond the trivial notice of a pleasant conceit observed a few years ago on the gravel walks of a garden outside Canton, described as "a pretty device . . . in a rude kind of shell-and-pebble mosaic in the gravelly paths, representing birds, animals, or other figures."[3] In short, mosaic, architectural or pictorial, appears to be "conspicuous by its absence" among the arts of the Celestial Empire.[4]

[1] Sir John Davis, *China*, vol. i. p. 435.

[2] S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, vol. ii. p. 120.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 10.

[4] The best books of reference are silent on the subject. Staunton's *Embassy*, 2 vols., does not mention it, but says "the floors are of marble or indurated earth," vol. ii. p. 370. The works of Barrow, Sir John Davis, and Wells Williams do not mention it. The Jesuit fathers Riccino and Trigault, A.D. 1616, and Ellis, who accompanied Macartney in his

A similar statement, and in the same vague manner, has been made about Egypt: certainly with more reason, but by no means with satisfactory result. It would be as possible for an ancient Egyptian as for any one else to have arranged an ornament mosaically, and no doubt he did so, as the wild Indians of North America did, and as the Mexicans do admirably with inlaid feathers to the present day. The inlaying of regularly-formed tiles in an ornamental pavement or against a wall should not, however, be classed with mosaic, if there is to be any orderly comprehension of the word. Of such kind is the earliest known applied architectural ornament in Egypt round a doorway of the Pyramid of Saccara, where small tiles of two colours placed alternately are set against the wall, and form an effective ornament to the entrance. This has been mistakenly described as a mosaic. Nor can the arrangement of glass beads woven together on threads into flat tablets of ornamental pattern on the pectoral plates of mummies, often mingled with figures in porcelain and both in real and imitative jewelry,[1] be rightly classed as mosaics, though writers have carelessly called them so. The frequent covering of a surface with little squares of inlaid materials has also often led to mis-statements about Egyptian mosaic. These inlays are found on furniture and boxes of which the sides are ornamented with alternate squares of dark and light blue glass or of ivory white and stained, cut out of sheets of about one-eighth of an inch thick, and cemented upon the wooden surface, looking like the tessellation of mosaic, but being no more than a coarse kind of geometrical incrustation, tarsiatura, or marquetry.[2] There is

Progress Overland to Pekin in 1816, are silent about it, and such is the case with others foreign and English.

[1] As in the Egyptian Museum at Turin.

[2] Specimens are in the Egyptian Collection of the British Museum, No. 5897, and others near.

among the Egyptian antiquities of the British Museum a curious little head-dress[1] of a figure found at Thebes, the surface of which is covered with little beads set longways and edgeways into a plaster ground to produce the effect of the *edges of small curls*, and round it is a band or fillet richly set with imitation jasper and gold, with a mosaic appearance, but, like the surface of the boxes mentioned above, being no more than an incrustation of small pieces of glass about one-third of an inch square and one-sixteenth thick. This little head-dress has been quoted as a mosaic. It is simply a unique and ingenious imitation of hair by the edges of small beads.

There is a form of Egyptian ornament that is produced precisely as the English Tunbridge ware is made, viz. by laying together long sticks of glass of various colours so arranged that, when cut across, the ends present the appearance of a minute tessellated mosaic with some definite design, such as a head or bird, or the many-coloured feathers of the winged orb or sacred hawk. These glass rods are fused together into a block, and being made elastic by heat, are drawn out to any length, the arrangement of the pattern being unchanged, and when thus reduced to the size of threads, and cut across, the extreme minuteness of the ornament would surprise a person unaware of the ingenious and simple way of producing it. If Tunbridge ware is rightly called mosaic, then this Egyptian glassware and its little curiosities of ingenuity may be so too.

The inlaying of pieces of coloured paste, glass and pottery is met with in places and belonging to periods that are independent of any relative influence. In the comparatively modern Frankish and Anglo-Saxon burial-places of the sixth and seventh centuries A.D.

[1] No. 2280.

in England, France, and Germany, ornaments of great variety have been found, having an appearance as much like mosaic as these Egyptian inlays, or of cloisonné enamels, but composed of thin pieces of coloured glass, and occasionally of coloured pastes and enamels set like jewels within thin fillets of metal; but these are not mosaics; and precisely in the same manner we find that in the distant ages of Egyptian art, jewelry and ornaments of costume were inlaid with little flat pieces of precious stone, fitted with exquisite nicety into forms of a design which are marked by their fillets of gold, similar to those of cloisonnés enamels. In this manner also, ivory tablets were ornamented with inlaid lapis lazuli in the form of feathers on the wings of the Bull of Nineveh and of the winged orb of Egypt. This system of partial inlay was most effectively used by Egyptian artists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries B.C. in ornamental designs made sometimes in relief upon tablets of baked clay or cement, on which the principal subject or figure, admirably modelled and clothed with elaborate draperies, had been painted with enamel colours, having the parts selected for special ornament hollowed out and inlaid with small strips or borders variously coloured;[1] but, again, these are not mosaics.

These inlaid tablets of cement or tile, with their crisp designs and multiplicity of refined detail, afford surprising evidence of the completeness at which the arts had arrived at that age. There is nothing experimental about them, but all their composition and ornament is effected with an artistic selection and confidence which only that maturity could have produced which implies centuries of previous civilisation.

The patterns painted on mummy cases are often

[1] *Vide* especially some tablets of the time of Rameses III., Egyptian Room Brit. Mus., No. 12321, and others about it, from 1330 to 1400 B.C.

so like mosaics as to appear like copies of real mosaics elsewhere, but no such originals are known or recorded. The only employment of anything like tesseræ as the nearest approach to a real Egyptian mosaic was in the chequer ornament often found on tiles and plaques. These chequers are usually of two colours, and are constructed not with tesseræ of these colours, but by colouring the surface of the tablets one colour, and hollowing out the alternate squares and filling them up with little cubes or tesseræ of the other colour.

A few years ago a tomb was discovered near the Pyramid of Meydoun, dating from the second or third dynasty (about B.C. 2400), on the side of which the stone was overlaid with a coating of a strong red cement, and upon it lines had been incised and filled with a white material to accentuate the features of the design. The principal subjects were the portraits of a man and woman seated side by side, and of somewhat less than natural size. They are described as drawn with much dignity, and that the effect of their eyes was very brilliant, "being inlaid with ivory, crystal, and dark ore" (much as the eyes among coloured hieroglyphic forms are habitually inlaid), and the whole picture was *painted* over black, red, and yellow, on a ground of white. A great authority has called this a mosaic;[1] if it be one, we must accept Egyptian mosaics as a genus absolutely apart.

The piecing and inlaying things and colours is so simple and natural a system of ornament that it is found everywhere and of all ages from Joseph's coat to a modern chess-board; and ornamental materials, mosaically arranged, are as common in Egypt as elsewhere; but any unquestionable mosaic, beyond the character of set jewelry or of inlaid ornamental acces-

[1] *History of Ancient Egypt.* By Brugsch-Bey. First edition, vol. i. p. 66.

sories of an altogether *secondary* character, is not known in Egypt, unless the little gems of glass Tunbridge ware be accepted as such. No monumental mosaic, as an art of national origin, whether tessellated like the pavements and pictures of Pompeii, or sectile like the walls and works of Florence, is to be found there.

An inscription on the wall of a tomb in the hill of Abt-el-Qurnah gives an account of the offerings made by Thutmes III. (about B.C. 1600) to the temple of the god Amon, and among them it describes "a beautiful harp inlaid with silver and gold, and blue, green, and other precious stones."

Thus in various forms of ornamental work their colours were arranged much as a mosaicist would have arranged them; and this and the decorative inlay and combination of materials in the semi-mosaic methods I have described, appear to have been their nearest approach to complete mosaic. The true mosaics in Egypt were first Greek then Roman in design and workmanship, and lastly Byzantine and Arab.

If the Greeks were in truth the earliest pre-eminent in this art, whence did they get the elements of it? They were a people of quick artistic perception, apt to seize upon an incomplete idea, no matter where or whence, and to turn it into a thing of beauty. All other of their arts were matured from initial forms created elsewhere. Were mosaics among them? Greece had all the elements of pictorial mosaic in use in the middle of the fifth century B.C., but the commerce of other nations had enriched it long before that time, and had brought to its shores—mostly through intermediary Phœnicia, the convenient centre in that age for the reception and dispersal of all art influences—the suggestive models of Oriental and Southern arts. The inlaid ornaments of Assyrian and Egyptian work-

manship had thus been known to it, but the fashion of adorning exteriors with inlaid coloured marbles appears in Greece itself at a very distant age. The tomb of Atreus, which was of the twelfth century B.C., is described by its latest explorer[1] as having originally presented a rich effect of colour as well as of ornamental carving. He writes of it thus: "The front surface, built of polished *brescia* blocks, was once coated in its upper part with slabs of *red*, *green*, and *white* marbles . . . the outer frame (of the façade) was formed of two slender embedded pillars of *dark gray* alabaster, the shafts of which were richly ornamented with sharp zigzags, spirals, etc. . . ." Nineveh could have taught it no better, for although many Assyrian ornaments had a mosaic character, and their architecture was adorned and inlaid or coated with figures, and numerous natural forms enamelled upon bricks, such work was not mosaic, nor had it any pictures in mosaic tessellation to give its first lesson to Greece. Nor could Persia do more, for it had derived the first models of its ornamental arts directly or indirectly from Assyria, Chaldæa, and Egypt. The only architectural mosaic of Persia, if indeed it may be dignified with the name, was of the most elementary kind, formed with bricks of two colours, gray and red, laid in patterns, of which, after all, the principal effect was obtained by their arrangement in projection or recess, producing those patterns in relief by light and shadow, as they are seen on the façades of the rock-cut tombs of the valley of

[1] Dr. H. Schliemann's *Tiryns*. 1886. Preface, pp. 39, 40. This employment of inlaid variously coloured marbles in architectural ornament had been recorded long before Dr. Schliemann by English travellers. In Dodwell's *Classical Tour*, vol. ii. p. 239, is an account of this monument: "The relief of the two lions which closes the triangular space over the gate of lions at Mycænæ consists of *greenish* marble, like the *green* basalt of Ægypt." "Fragments of decoration on both sides of the entrance of the Treasury of Atreus are of *green*, *red*, and *white* stone," etc. etc. Donaldson's supplement to Stuart's *Athens*, and Dodwell as above.

Doganlu and the neighbourhood of Persepolis. The inlaid marble floors of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) at "Shushan, the palace" (Susa), about B.C. 480, were certainly of sectile mosaic character, possibly of such designs as the sculptured floors of Assyria had suggested, and such as the pieces of coloured marbles found near Babylon justify us in believing. Such a fashion would have been known to other nations for centuries, but they afford no precedent for pictorial tessellation, nor did any other part of Persian architecture, of which the polychromatic ornament consisted in coloured materials used broadly, as by enamelled bricks and constructional and inlaid marbles.

But at a time many centuries before all these, a complete mosaic applied to architectural ornament had been perfected in Chaldæa. On the site of the ancient Erech,[1] in the province of Babylon, now known as Warkah, was discovered a few years ago, among its most ancient remains, a building ornamented with *tessellated mosaic*, covering with various contrasted patterns the forms of its original architecture. The style of this architecture is rudely simple, consisting of alternate plain surfaces and groups of seven semi-columns, suggesting an original construction of wood, in which these large shafts or stems would have been the poles of straight timber (palm-tree ?) set close together of equal lengths without base or capital. These forms, subsequently followed in the earliest brick architecture of Babylon, are found at the great necropolis of Warkah. The mosaic is formed of tesseræ (or, as from their shape, they are called "cones") of terra-cotta, some left with their natural yellow colour, some coloured red and black, and so shaped as to suit the inlaying of the rounded surfaces of those half-columns, by being tapered at one end like pegs. The wall, of

[1] Babel and Erech, and Accad and Calneh. Genesis x. 10.

which about thirty feet remained, and the mosaic are thus described by their discoverer.

"The cones, embedded in a cement of mud with chopped straw, were fixed horizontally with their circular bases facing outwards; some had been dipped in *red and black colour, and were arranged in various ornamental patterns (of three colours) such as diamonds, triangles, zigzags, and stripes.* . . . The wall had a flat surface of *14 feet long (covered with a diamond pattern mosaic)* projecting 1 foot 9 beyond a series of half columns on each side of it, *ornamented with spirals, zigzags, and lozenges.*"[1] The site was evidently that of a vast burial-place, and "from its position, scarcely above the level of the desert, I regard it as one of the earliest relics discovered at Warkah."[2]

Elsewhere in Babylonia the ruins of similar mosaics are found.[3] But beside these aboriginal tessellated

[1] W. K. Loftus's *Travels and Researches in Chaldæa, etc.*, 1857.

[2] "Warkah, its ruins and remains," published separately from the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, March 1856, p. 23. W. Kennet Loftus.

With respect to the date of this mosaic no exactness can be ascertained, but close by it is a building *of precisely the same character*, of which the sun-dried bricks "bear the impression of a cuneiform inscription, and are cemented with bitumen, recording . . . the dedication of the building to the Moon by King Urukh about 2234 B.C." The wall of this building is so curious that its description may interest the reader. "The most striking feature of the front settles, I think, the moot question whether the Babylonians employed the column as an architectural embellishment. Seven times on the lower portion of the building is the same sacred number of half columns repeated, the rudest perhaps that were ever reared, but built moulded with semicircular bricks. . . . The entire absence of cornice, capital, base, or diminution of shaft, as characteristic of other columnar architecture, and their peculiar and original disposition in rows like palm-logs, suggest the type from which they sprang. There is *not a line in the face to which foreign influence can be traced.*" Other peg-shaped but much larger cones were found lying about in great numbers, but these were sepulchral memorials with cuneiform inscriptions all over them, referring even to still earlier dates. In the British Museum (Chaldæan collection) is a cylinder of green jasper inscribed with the name of Hashamar, a viceroy under Ur-Id or Amil-ea, "the man of the River God, King of Erech"—Warkah: about 2300 B.C.

[3] At Mugeyer were found "many pieces of polished marble perforated

mosaic, the same country affords the evidence of mosaic of sectile marble suggesting some idea of that in the Palace of Shushan; whether for floors or dadoes cannot be said, but the recurrence of marble knobs among the flat pieces suggests ornamentation more suited to walls than floors. Their discoverer thus describes them as "numerous pieces of marble, alabaster, and agate, of all shapes—heart-shaped, oval, circular, square, and some like a ball. They are found all over the mounds in the Jezireh and Iraq, particularly at Maujur." He then refers to the vast quantity of mosaic cones found in the same place, and to Mr. Loftus's description of them at Warkah, and adds "with regard to those pieces of sectile marbles, from the number of fragments discovered at various places, it seems to have been one of the most usual decorations employed in Lower Babylonia."[1]

Here then we seem to find ourselves among the very originals of all mosaic. Certainly in no other country has anything of the kind been found at such a date. It is complete tessellation, only with round instead of angular tesseræ. The Chaldæans had to decorate their coarse and only building materials, brickwork; so with these forms of mosaic and marbles, and with sheets of precious metals and painting they

at the back, fragments of plain cones and cylinders, curious-shaped tiles, and small bricks about ½ an inch thick and 6 inches long, floors of beaten clay or sand, walls covered with fine plaster rudely painted, on one was the figure of a man holding a bird in his hand, and a smaller figure near him in red paint. . . . (p. 411). *The mounds were literally covered with conical pieces* (mosaic cones) of baked clay, about ½ to ¼ inch diameter . . . and in nearly all the trenches were found *marble* and *limestone* cones 4 to 10 inches long; some had their edges painted black, some with a rim round the edge filled with copper, from 1 to 3 inches diameter at the base (tapering to a point)." T. E. Taylor. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. iv. p. 410.

[1] *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. iv., 1855, "Ruins of Mugeyer," pp. 260 and 410, and vol. xv., 1855, pp. 268, 274, 411-415. T. E. Taylor.

covered their walls. Commerce, much wider and more active than commonly supposed, carried with it the traditions of the style and fashions of the arts. Caravan roads were common both inland and to the sea-coast, and thence to the western world the character of Chaldæan art was spread far and wide. Assyria and the east, that is to say Persia, were educated by it; and from the Syrian coast it can hardly have failed to reach Greece. But as far as mosaics are concerned, those of Babylonia were decorative, not pictorial; they possessed, however, the true principle of decorative tessellation.[1] Anything of such early date approaching *pictorial* representation, by arrangement of self-coloured materials, is not found, except in the minute glass gems of Egypt, made for rings and brooches, on which are set, as already described, microscopic figures, such as heads, birds, and hieroglyphs. These may have suggested to artistic Greek eyes the conversion of the Chaldæan architectural tessellation to pictorial effect; but all such explanation, though most probable, can only be speculative. Egypt had nothing like Greek mosaic, and Greece had nothing like the diaper patterns of Babylonian mosaic; but the ideas are fusible, and directly or indirectly from those aboriginal arts, the art of Greece must have derived its birth.

But on the soil of Greece itself, at Tiryns, have been found pavements of very early date suggestive of coloured mosaic floors.[2] In works of ornamental art, Tiryns, itself of Phrygian origin, traded with Phœnicia and Egypt. The floors found there, and of a date not less than 1000 B.C., are of clay, with a thickness of lime concrete above them, into which, in situations at all exposed to wear or weather, pebbles were set, and

[1] Of various degrees of coarseness and fineness the cone tesseræ have been found varying from above an inch to a quarter of an inch diameter.

[2] *Tiryns*, by Dr. H. Schliemann, pp. 275, 276. London, 1886.

Dr. Schliemann, describing them, writes that "in the great men's court and in the great Propyleum, in the latter the pebbles were so prominent that we may describe the floor as *a mosaic of pebbles*. In the rooms these pebbles are generally absent, and accordingly they have a smoother floor; but, instead, the mortar is made into a carpet-pattern of scratched lines . . . remains of *red* and *blue* colour found in several rooms show that the floor *was also painted;* in one place we could still perceive the colouring of the floor with red geometrical ornaments of circular and waving lines." If two and two may be put together, we have here not indeed the complete fact, but a very plain suggestion of a coloured mosaic tessellation, sufficient for the eye of a quick artist to adopt, and about which the last words read like a description of many mosaics that we know well.

From the walls of Babylonia and the floors of Tiryns there is a long interval before we come to the earliest known pictorial mosaics. They were in Greece, at Delphi and Olympia. The earliest reference in literature to what appears to have been a pictorial mosaic, is found in a scholium upon a passage in Lucian, who, writing about miscellaneous subjects, refers, in passing, to the story of Jupiter determining the centre of his earthly dominions by the flight of two eagles, eastward and westward, that, having made the circuit of the earth, its centre would be ascertained by the spot on which they met. This spot was marked by a large stone, which from that story was called the Omphalos or navel of the earth, over which the Temple of Delphi was built. Lucian refers so incidentally to the legend that the scholiast, to enlighten his readers, comments on the passage thus: ". . . the centre of the earth. . . . They say that in Delphi there is an omphalos upon the pavement in the temple, and about it an eagle is represented (or painted, γεγράφθαι)

'*by setting together of stones*,' and this place is said to be the centre of the (whole) earth." Lucian merely refers to the story, his scholiast refers to a local work of art illustrative of it, as an anecdote explanatory of the text, such as a well-informed writer of the time would afford from his own acquaintance with artistic or archæological subjects. His words clearly refer to a mosaic; and the probability of such an ornament being found there is corroborated by the discovery of one at Olympia, similar in character of construction, of a date slightly subsequent to what might with probability be assigned to this at Delphi.[1]

The mosaic at Olympia was discovered by the members of the French Scientific Expedition, in the Pronaos of the Temple of Jupiter. It is "still *in situ*, and probably the earliest extant specimen of Greek mosaic."[2] The description of it in the *Report of the French Expedition in the Morea*, states: "This mosaic is evidently of the same date as the building of the Temple; it is executed in pebbles from the river

[1] The passage in Lucian occurs in the line 70, p. 251, vol. ii., edit. Amsterdam, 1743. "De Saltatione." "*καὶ τὸ μέσον τῆς γῆς εὑρισκομένον πτῆσει τῶν ἀετων.*" The words of the scholium are "*Λεγουσὶν ἐν Δελφοῖς ὄμφαλον εἶναι ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐδάφους τοῦ νεὼ, καὶ περὶ αὐτὸν αἰετὸν γεγράφθαι ἀπὸ συνθέσεως λίθων καὶ τοῦτο ἐφᾶσκον τὸ μέσον ἁπάσης τῆς γῆς.*" The existence of this "navel" of the earth (an aerolith? "the stone which fell down from Jupiter") is referred to by Strabo and Pausanias. The former, thus: "*δείκνυται δὲ καὶ ὄμφαλός τις ἐν τῷ ναῷ τεταινιωμένος καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ αἱ δύο εἰκόνες τοῦ μύθου.*" "There is exhibited too in the temple a certain omphalos, and upon it the two figures of the story." He thus adds to the illustration given by Lucian's scholiast, who describes not the omphalos but the ornamental work of a "painting made by the composition of stones" on the *pavement around it*, the figure of an eagle being its principal subject, which in no way interferes with Strabo's reference to the great stone alone with "two figures of the story" upon it. Pausanias's notice of it leads to the same conclusion, but he specifies the omphalos as of white marble. "Pausanias describes in the Temple of Apollo itself two old stones, one apparently an aerolith—which were treated with great respect."—Mahaffy, *Rambles and Studies in Greece*, p. 220.

[2] C. T. Newton's *Collected Essays on Art and Archæology*, p. 342. 1880.

Alphæus. The design is oblong, of two nearly square compartments, enclosed within a broad border of double interlacing fret, and in the centre of each is a figure, one of a Triton, the other of a Syren, surrounded by a graceful border of Greek honeysuckle."[1]

The Triton is drawn with great spirit, with one hand holding to his mouth a spiral shell horn, brandishing an oar with the other, and carrying a child on the coils of his tail. The colours are very distinct, the hair being chestnut, the bodies pale flesh tint, and other parts varied with black, white, red, and yellow, the figure of the Syren being similarly coloured. It was found under a pavement of fine marbles, with another mosaic near it, but of less ancient date. Mosaic appears to have been confined to the subsidiary parts of great Greek temples. The pavement of the central nave at Olympia, as that of the Parthenon, was of white marble; the side aisles had been floored with stucco at a level slightly above the central floor, and round the space where the throne of Pheidias's great chryselephantine Jupiter had been placed, the pavement of black marble[2] was found *in situ*.

Such were Greek mosaics about the middle of the fifth century B.C., but they afford no clue to their own history, or to the art out of which they grew. Here then are specimens of a developed art, suggesting the same difficulty as that of the well-known example of the work of Sosus (about B.C. 220), described by Pliny, as so complete a picture of the things apparently littered upon the floor of a room, as to have seemed realities. In the centre was the famous design of the so-called Pliny's doves,[3] similar to that in

[1] *Expédition Scientifique en Morée.* A. Blouet. Paris, 1831.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Commonly called so from his description of them, "Mirabilis ibi columba bibens, et aquam umbra capitis infuscans. Apricantur aliæ scabentes sese in canthari labro." *H. N.* xxxvi. 60.

the Capitol at Rome, which is not altogether rejected by competent archæologists from being the actual work of Sosus, the point of objection being that some of the small tesseræ are of glass, and it being asserted by others that glass was not used in mosaics till the time of the empire, a criticism to which I venture to reply that it would be true at Rome, but that, if this be the original, it is a Greek mosaic, and at the places whence Greece mainly drew the use of glass, that material was used for many ornamental purposes, and notably for that of the imitation of precious marbles and jewels, which (as in that of the Battle of Issus) were used profusely in Greek mosaic. The mosaic of Pliny's doves is composed of marbles, jewels, and a few glass imitations of them. Still, the originality of this work can only be conjectural, especially as another of the same subject was found at Naples in 1833, and equal in execution to that at Rome.[1]

The use of ornamental floors (subsequently known at Rome as "pavimenta sculpturata") may have been common long before that date, as in Assyria, and the colouring of them would have been a natural development as at Tiryns. It is to about B.C. 480 that the common reference is made for the earliest known description of a (possible) mosaic, viz. that of the floor in the palace of Ahasuerus, mentioned in the book of Esther, as "a pavement of red and blue and white and black marble;" but whether this were a merely geometrical pavement, or one of sectile pieces of ornamental forms, we have no means of knowing. Some inference as to the character of its design may however be drawn from a fine piece of ornamental floor[2] from the North Palace of Sardanapalus at

[1] The fineness of the work of the doves of the Capitol may be understood from there being an average of 160 tesseræ to the superficial inch.

[2] Now in the Assyrian collection, British Museum.

Koujunjik, of above a century earlier, richly carved in a single block (measuring about 13 feet 6 inches by 9 feet), for the arts of Persia were as much indebted to Assyrian traditions as Assyria itself was to Chaldæa. The design is that of a diaper of conventional flowers fitting each other in squares, and enclosed by a broad border of lotus buds and flowers, suggesting a still earlier derivation from the painted and sculptured designs of Egypt. It is a grand specimen of the "pavimentum sculpturatum" of the seventh century B.C., and of a design admirably suitable for a mosaic, whether tessellated or sectile.

The actual locality to which the origin of the art of picture in mosaic can be assigned, is therefore still obscure. Varieties of it may have existed for centuries before Greece was a nation, but to the graceful imagination of the Hellenes[1] may probably have been rightly assigned the application of it to *pictorial representation*, such as the examples already mentioned sufficiently show, at least as early as the middle of the fifth century B.C.

Only a few names of Greek mosaicists have been preserved, among the best known of which are Parnesos, an artist of Elis, and Sosus of Pergamus, the artist of Pliny's doves, and of the pavement of the "unswept floor," only known by Pliny's description. One of the finest of the Pompeian mosaics, constructed of tesseræ of vitreous enamel,[2] is also signed by its artist in Greek "Dioscorides the Samian did this." The subject of it is a group of three musicians practising, of which the central figure wears a female mask, and is playing the castinets, bending forward as if marking the time of the man, who in an attitude of gay complacency holds up his tambourine to his ear. The third is a woman

[1] "Pavimenta originem apud Græcos habent elaborata arte picturæ ratione." Pliny, *N. H.* xxxvi. 6.

[2] Vide *R. Museo Borbonico*, V. iv. tav. 34.

standing behind them playing the double pipe, and a boy near her watches intently all that is going on. The excellent pose of the figures and draperies, and the delicious combination of comedy and gravity in the whole group is so admirable as to suggest its derivation from some fine original of which Dioscorides has been the ingenious copyist.

The absence of any notice of mosaics among the works of art in Greece at the time of Pausanias must not be taken as any reason for supposing their non-existence. He was more scholar than artist, and more interested in the search for historical works than in any independent notice of others by himself. The demand for works of Greek art was no less an archæological than an artistic craze among the dilettanti of the empire, and all available works were taken to Rome without consideration of cost or injury. Had mosaics existed in the form of pictures *upon walls*, they would indubitably have been among the choice things removed; but as pavements they may easily have disappeared by spoliation, as invaluable quarries for Roman mosaicists, just as Roman works themselves became subsequently the stores of tesseræ and coloured glass for Christian artists of the middle ages. Some of these at Pompeii were wall pictures, as that one by Dioscorides, but the finest of all, that of the Battle of Issus, is a pavement. If such as this were commonly so, as there is reason to believe, the Greeks, no less than the luxurious Romans, were indeed reckless in their use of valuable materials, among which not only tesseræ of rare marbles, but of precious jewels also were introduced. Whence their designs were derived is not and probably never will be known, but their reference to great originals is on all grounds a fair presumption. The style is Greek, and, when signed, they are so with Greek names; it is therefore fair to conclude, that whether imported from

Greece, or made on the spot in Italy, they represent the Greek method, and the choice and use of materials such as were received traditionally from Greek mosaicists of long past time.

The subject of the most famous Pompeian mosaic is that of the Battle of Issus, in which the prominent figure appears to be Alexander the Great, in the thick of the fight, having just speared his foe, whose horse has fallen in the attempt to fly. The tide of the battle has at that moment turned, and victory gained. The direction of the groups, the attitudes of the figures, confirm that idea, and the whole composition has been most artfully conceived, representing by comparatively few figures the rout of a great army. All is confusion, but without the smallest confusion in the arrangement of the picture. The artist has all his feeling and expression well in hand; and by a more masterly scheme never was the crisis of a battle more admirably exhibited than in this fragment of a half-ruined mosaic. The rich owner of the House of the Fawn used it as a pavement; and it is not known whether the Greeks ever used mosaic for other purposes, but if not, their rule was certainly this, that where art was to be perfected, cost and materials were beyond consideration.

The earliest mosaic in Italy, of which an account has been preserved, is that which, on Pliny's authority, was made for Sylla and placed in the Temple of Fortune at Preneste (Palestrina). There is, however, the utmost uncertainty as to what this was. Several mosaics have been found there, and fragments of them are now in the Hall of the Animals in the Vatican Museum, one of which is a fine arabesque in black and white marble tesseræ, having for its central subject an eagle killing a hare; but the great one specially known as the Palestrina mosaic, somewhat over 18 feet long by 14 broad, and plainly the work of Greek artists, from the

numerous Greek words inlaid in it, bears such evidence upon itself as to its date and motive as to put it out of all association with the goddess of Fortune or with Sylla. The scene is evidently upon the Nile, and the period it represents is that of the Empire. The costumes, the armour, the galley with many oars, and the general character of the art would be Roman of that period. It is an archæological curiosity, but beyond that, a peculiar interest in this large work is the suggestion it affords of the way in which great wall paintings were arranged by the Greeks. Here is a complex representation of numerous incidents, each one forming a group complete in itself, and isolated from the rest, though forming together the picture of one descriptive history. This pavement, if placed against a wall, would have the upper part occupied by bare sandy hills with groups of negroes in various places, and wild beasts prowling near the banks of the river. The intermediate country, occupying that part which in a modern picture would be the middle distance, is broken up into spaces of open water, rocks, and islands, with figures of wild beasts, birds, and fishes, boats and fishermen, tents and houses, scattered about till it approaches the lowest part or foreground, where numerous buildings and groups of persons engaged in peaceful pursuits, sitting on the banks under awnings of trellis-work, with flowers of the lotus budding and blooming above the water, illustrate a scene of peaceful civilisation. In the corner towards the right hand is an architectural portico, beneath which and under an ample awning a figure, that can be none other than a Roman emperor, is depicted, attended by a group of soldiers, and in an attitude of address toward a female figure standing on the opposite bank, in a doorway with the Roman eagle above it.

Thus this varied composition appears to suggest

the mode of pictorial composition, by which "the whole story of the Iliad" was represented in mosaic in the apartments of the great yacht which Archimedes designed for Hiero of Syracuse (in the third century B.C.), a continuous composition of numerous subjects, and following, as might reasonably be supposed in a country specially under Greek influence, the traditional treatment of complex historical wall painting. This Palestrina mosaic, taken as an upright picture, appears to fulfil, though roughly, the artistic conditions that characterised those classic paintings. It treats each group as a complete composition; the landscape of the upper part which represents distant objects, far up the windings of the Nile, is represented on the same scale on the same plane, and in the same tones of colour as the groups and scenery below, its many events forming but one picture.

Irrespective of its peculiarities as a work of art, its subject is curious and interesting. It has been taken by one antiquary for a map of Egypt; and certainly it is composed much as a map of ancient style might be, and the figures of negroes, hippopotami, crocodiles, palms, and lotus flowers, are as characteristic of Egypt as the creatures and inhabitants of the world are intended to be, on the mediæval *Mappa Mundi* of Hereford. Another, taking as his guide the emperor's figure, with attendant soldiers, and the fulness of the river, the extent of country exhibited, and the quiet occupations of the people, has explained this complex picture as that of Egypt, at the period of peace immediately subsequent to the expedition of Augustus, which occurred at the season when the Nile was overflowing its banks. Another has hit upon an explanation equally possible, that it is a work executed during the Egyptian mania at Rome, flattering to the taste of the Emperor Hadrian, who on his return introduced

Egyptian fashions and deities, eagerly adopted by the *blazés* Romans, delighted at the waif of novelty.

Artistically it is coarse, but valuable for the reasons described; and, as a work of a very inferior artist, who would follow, however clumsily, the broad system of the better painters of his day, it suggests much as to what was practised and approved in the arts preceding and contemporary with it.

The ambition of Roman life was rather bodily and intellectually muscular than artistic; but whatever glorified that life in public estimation, or glorified the individual by the exhibition of his wealth, was an essential element in that life; things of grand effect, luxury and splendour, were estimated at the highest, just so far as in use and degree they ministered to such purposes. Individuals rested their social position on the splendour of their possessions, so the world was ransacked for them: the gods of Greece were torn from their thrones, the pictures and statues of the "old masters" were imported, reckless of the disfigurement of the ancient shrines or of the prices paid for them. The marbles, elephants, and obelisks of Africa added to the heterogeneous magnificence of Rome, and only the weight of the pyramids secured them to the desert.

In one very early, and at a later period, the Romans surpassed the Greeks in their sense of artistic propriety, namely in assigning to the higher class of mosaic the honour of a safe position upon walls. They maintained indeed the Greek fashion of rich pavements, and inlaid them with precious stones, and then trampled their costly beauty with their heels, as Lucan scornfully describes them, "Purpureusque lapis, totâque effusus in anlâ calcabatur onyx;" but under better auspices they went on to the development of pictorial mosaic, and prepared the way for that vast extension of it that soon after took place under Christian influences. The common use of variously

coloured glass afforded this opportunity, so the tesseræ no longer laboriously obtained from marble were cast in glass, and the skill attained in gilding it was applied to them at small cost, and thus all the materials which ultimately contributed to the glory of Byzantine and other sacred buildings in east and west were prepared.

Among the pictorial purposes for which mosaic was used, portraiture was much favoured in Rome, one of the earliest known instances of which was that of a portrait of himself in a mosaic of precious stones and pearls which Pompey displayed in his triumphs. The great pavement covered with portraits of Caracalla's favourite gladiators will be at once remembered—a brutal gallery; and the portraits of the friends of the Emperor Commodus which were erected in a portico or alcove of his garden, as described by Spartian, "in porticu curvâ picturatâ de musivo," among which that of his friend Pescennius Niger figured in the attitude of one carrying the insignia of the goddess Isis. Imaginary portraits are also occasionally found in ancient tessellated pavements, as on one in the museum at Cologne, on which are the busts of Socrates, Diogenes, Cleobulus, and Sophocles, with their names inlaid in Greek. The practice of real portraiture in this manner continued for many centuries, two good examples of which are the portraits of Flavius J. Julianus and his wife M. Simplicia Rustica, found in 1656 in the catacomb of Santa Ciriaca, which have a particular interest in the extreme rarity of mosaics in the catacombs, and from the near relationship of these persons to the Imperial family, which the names of Flavius Julianus, borne by all the sons of Constantine, suggest, and those of Rusticus Julianus further corroborate,[1] who died pre-

[1] These portraits are preserved in the Chigi Library at Rome. Vide *De Rossi Musaici Christiani*, 1872, where facsimiles are given in colour, and an excellent historical reference to the persons.

fect of Rome in A.D. 388, and had been regarded as a possible successor to the Empire. The portraits are small, within circles contained in a framed background about nine inches across. Julianus is habited in a dress of gold tissue and purple, characteristic of a nobleman. His wife, in a dark dress of great simplicity, is in the Christian attitude of prayer, her hands being extended as an "Orante." Another historical mosaic portrait was that of Constantine placed by Phocas in a chapel on the site of the Forum of Augustus at Rome, of which no traces remain. The well-known portraits of Justinian and the Empress Theodora in San Vitale at Ravenna are unmistakably real, that of Justinian being very remarkable for the natural character of its drawing, and its definite and intelligent expression. The largest portrait ever made in mosaic was probably that of a full length of Theodoric in the forum at Naples, of which the tesseræ composing the head fell off the wall, by a singular fatality, just before his death. These are but a few illustrations of a practice which continued increasingly in the progress of the art, of which only one other historical example need be mentioned, viz. that of Charlemagne in the triclinium of the Lateran, which was rescued from the fire which occurred there in the troublous times of Clement the Fifth (1305-16), and of which the much-injured remains are now preserved in the Vatican.

The application of mosaic to figures in relief need only be mentioned as a curiosity of the art, and indeed a misuse of it, for mosaic is essentially pictorial, and has no quality in common with sculpture, but is rather a hindrance to its effect. The few attempts that have been made of it, and which have been beautiful in spite of themselves, have owed all their excellence to the fine taste of the artists experimenting upon a *tour de force*.[1]

[1] Faulkener's *Dædalus*, p. 124, and R. Rochette's *Peintures Antiques, Inédites*. Appendix.

Early in the first century mosaic had become a necessity of furniture among the Romans, not at home merely, but wherever their conquests and their colonies took them. The "pavement" in the Hall of Judgment at Jerusalem was but another word for mosaic, which was then universally used to dignify the seat of a governor and to furnish the tent of a general, as had been the practice as early as the time of Julius Cæsar, who carried mosaic about in his campaigns, that his official "pavement" might be always ready.[1] This general adoption of it, which extended to basilicas and baths, public halls and private houses, necessitated the adaptation of native materials, where the marble of the earlier styles and the glass tesseræ of the later could not be obtained; so red, blue, and yellow-coloured stone, as commonly used for their mosaics in England, and clay baked black or red, supplied their requisite materials. With so much that is interesting in them, it is the more to be regretted that no clue has been obtained to the artists who composed their designs; but the whole character of them, the usual excellence of their composition, the artistic grouping and attitudes of the figures, the arrangement and appropriateness of the decorative parts, suggest that the originals were the work of better heads and hands than those of the skilled artisans who would have sufficed to copy the cartoons and to set the tesseræ.

Thus in numerous examples an inestimable service has been rendered by mosaics by their preservation of the designs of ancient pictures and wall paintings, illustrating the specialities of artistic principles of ancient schools, and in many cases with a truer reminiscence of their colouring than the painted lechithoi or the plastered walls of buried cities have afforded.

[1] Suetonius, in his *Life of Julius Cæsar*, describes it thus, "In expeditionibus *tessellata et sectilia* circumtulisse."

Beside that of the Battle of Issus, already described, one illustration, with its Greek associations at Pompeii, and one with those of classic Rome, will be enough.

The subject of the former is Force overcome by Love, a circular mosaic pavement in the Neapolitan Museum, figured and described in the seventh volume of the *Museo Borbonico*, plate 61. In the centre a lion, of colossal proportion in comparison with the figures around him, has snapped the bands of which the tattered ends are flying from his legs; but he bows his head before the Amorini who have bound him with a wreath of flowers, and are scattering others among his mane from a cornucopia. Behind him a most coy figure of a little cupid sits with half-averted face, playing a lyre, and near him a priestess, draped most gracefully, and with her head crowned with vine leaves, stands at the angle of a terrace which forms the background, and pours a libation to Bacchus, with her wreathed thyrsus in the other hand, and her tambourine laid beside her. In front two cupids present to the lion a torch and a bouquet, and two presiding nymphs in rich drapery and with wreathed hair are seated on rocks right and left; trees, rocks, and the front of a small temple filling in the vacancies. The colours are as charming as the playful and modest gracefulness of the composition—an architectonic picture, of which the original must have afforded the opportunities for the highest character of drawing and expression in its individual figures, but indifferent to the easy artificialities of pictorial effect. That this was a copy of some famous work is inferred from the studied character of the design, and from another mosaic of the same subject (with a few alterations or omissions common to almost all such copies) found at Antium.

Of a different character, but the copy of some ancient work, and illustrative of the same principles, is

the Roman mosaic of Bellerophon found at Autun. The young hero is represented mounted upon Pegasus, and rising in the air to attack the chimæra; one arm is hidden behind the horse's ample mane, the other is raised directing the thrust of his spear, and the effect of vigour and rapidity is enhanced by the whirling folds of drapery as if rolled round him by a storm, and forming a wild frame above his head. The attitude of the winged Pegasus, rampant above the double-headed monster, to which Bellerophon is dealing his death-blow, completes the dramatic action of the group.

But an interest of wider scope both to archæologist and artist has been afforded by the variety of subjects in these ancient works taken from contemporary life. Mythological subjects and conventional forms of composition are indeed the most common, but beside them are illustrations of the habits and occupation of the people, such as in domestic or hunting scenes, races and combats of the circus, costume, portraiture, and all kinds of incident and detail that exhibit the prevailing taste and civilisation of the age.

One of the best examples of this kind is the great mosaic of Italica near Seville. About one-third of its central space, in length and breadth, is occupied by a representation of the Roman circus, sufficiently complete to illustrate the whole arrangement of its ground-plan. Groups of men and horses are distributed all over it, some in full swing of the race, some wandering about on foot as if lost in it; in one place a charioteer has come to utter grief and is struggling beneath his horses, at another two men are helping a wounded combatant off the ground, and at the farther end, separated from the race, is a space occupied by gladiators. The remaining two-thirds of the mosaic is filled with numerous circles, enclosing within wreaths and coloured borders busts of the muses with their names inlaid, and

others containing figures of birds, animals, centaurs, and branches of leaves and fruit in natural colours, the whole being enclosed in a richly coloured border of many patterns. But the once brilliant city of Italica is no more. It owed its origin to Scipio Africanus, who after his conquest of the province, founded it as a home for his disabled soldiers. It rose to great importance, and was the birthplace of the Emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Theodosius; but now no more remains upon its ancient site but the small village of Santiponce or Sevilla la vieja.

Nowhere, however, is the entire scene of the circus exhibited in such completeness as in the great mosaic at Lyons. It is a superb work. The general design consists of a central subject set within a broad border of conventional foliage and flowers that spring from a scrolling stem beautifully drawn and coloured. Within this, on a black ground throughout, is the Roman circus with all its apparatus complete. At one end is the Prætorian lodge raised above the arena and shaded by an ornamental awning, and within it is a group of figures, the central one of which is the Prætor or presiding judge, leaning forward and holding over the front of his seat the handkerchief that had signalled the start. Beneath is the main entrance to the arena, with attendant figures or heralds standing right and left. A strong high palisade guards the spectators from the combatants. In the centre of the arena is the spina, which appears as an elaborate construction with an obelisk in the centre, and enclosing a long canal of water within its low boundary walls. At each end is a massive block of masonry forming the two metæ, which are distinguished by three tall pointed posts painted at one end of the course red, at the other white. Over the canal, and near each end, are slight barriers supporting figures of dolphins, and the gilt wooden eggs, sacred to

Castor and Pollux, that marked the number of the courses to be run round the spina, one egg being taken off at each round, till the winning chariot reached the white line drawn across the sand, which marked the beginning and end of the race (ad calcem pervenire). Eight chariots are contending for the prize, and by the accidents that are exhibited and the excited attitudes of the attendants, some on horseback, some running on foot, one brandishing a whip to urge on the horses of his faction, one with a basin of water to throw over the heated wheels, the race seems to be approaching its close. There are four chariots on each side, probably all intended to be quadrigæ (four-horsed), but where they are fallen to the ground and the men and horses are thrown into struggling heaps, the artist has not clearly shown that number, but the smash in each case is well depicted by the broken remnants of wheels and chariots overturned, and the drivers prostrate upon their infuriated horses. The charioteers are dressed in green, blue, red, and white, the four orthodox colours of the factions, before Domitian added the purple and gold. The horses with long tails (more Britannico) are bay, white, and gray, and the whole scene is most animated. The realities of such events were the delight of Roman life. The charioteers were commonly drawn from the social class of slaves, but nobles and even emperors have taken part with them, shrouding the vainglory of popular applause beneath the pretended heroism of Homeric examples. Women too have contended in the arena. The race of the fleet-footed Atalanta was but child's play to the violence in which Roman women joined, to the dishonour of their sex. The antagonism of the factions led at last to such scenes of violence, too well remembered in the early history of Constantinople, that the discontinuance of these games was decreed by Justinian, and not renewed till by order of Pope Paul

the Second, in 1495, they were reinstituted in simpler form, and continue to this day as an amusement of the Carnival.

In classical times the provision of the games of the circus was a sure and easy way to popularity; but at Lyons the public benefactor Ligurius was estimated for services more solid than these, and recorded on a tablet erected to his memory by his fellow-citizens, who in enumerating his honours could not fail to wind them up by the climax that "he had given them public games" ("Idem ludos circenses dedit"), such as this great mosaic represents.

Another very favourite subject was taken from the realm of Neptune, and the increasing recurrence of it towards and after the close of the first century A.D. has been attributed to the increased popularity of that deity on the extension of Roman commerce by sea, which reached its acme at the time when mosaic became the common appendage of every house in countries under Roman influence. From northern Britain to the African shores of the Mediterranean this was the case; and although there may be other reasons for marine subjects being adopted, as they were very appropriately in baths, and from the general adaptability of the ideal forms of tritons, syrens, and sea monsters to the scrolling ornament and the rough and broad designs suitable to pavement mosaic, still there is some ground to credit the popular cultus of Neptune as the originating motive of the very wide adoption of those subjects. The coast of Spain affords a good instance of it on the floor of the church of St. Michael at Barcelona, where the whole glory of the ocean kingdom is portrayed in mosaic, with fishes, nereids, and tritons sporting among the waves, and indicating the spot to have been once occupied by a temple of Neptune.

But of all glorifications of Neptune, the design of a

mosaic found at Constantine is unequalled. In contrast with the animation of the whole scene, Neptune and Amphitrite, relieved of all impediments of drapery, as is the wont of marine deities, stand side by side full front in their golden chariot, drawn by four dark green hippocamps surging wildly through the waves—a grand ocean quadriga; winged genii have thrown a rich red scarf as an arch above their heads; below them two children are riding upon dolphins, and two boats at full sail occupy the principal place, steered by children, while others are fishing from the bows; and all about are shells, fish, and marine insects, drawn and coloured to the life. The whole sea and air are full of life. This artistic whirl of imaginary beings, of figures and animals in water and air, is the dash of a broad sketch realised in mosaic that, had it been a work of the renaissance instead of the decline, might have come of the free taste and free hand of such a one as Julio Romano, or even a greater decorative artist than he. The mosaicist may show a failing here and there, but his design bears the sure stamp of a master's hand. This picture marks the place of dignity at one end of a large pavement, the rest of which is covered with a geometrical design divided into octagons by wreaths of laurel leaves beautifully coloured with blended green and blue, and with interweaving ribbons and fleurettes of countless colours filling up the spaces of the white ground.[1]

This and other pavements found on the site of ancient Carthage, at Constantine, Utica, and their neighbourhoods, form a distinguished group among the mosaics of the world. The subtle refinement in the art of colouring which they display approaches very nearly to the finest of the old mosaics found at Pom-

[1] It is admirably illustrated in colour in the "Report of the French Researches in Algeria," vol. *Archéologie.*

peii and elsewhere, that reflect the traditions of Greek influence. The artistic sense and technical delicacy with which their tesseræ were handled can only be likened to the masterly mosaic with which a great painter inlays his work, his brush at every stroke inlaying and multiplying tints and hues that singly seem to have no affinity to their place, but together, like drops fallen from a rainbow, blend into an effect of rich and harmonious breadth.

One of the most important of the mosaics of classic times (measuring originally nearly thirty feet square) was discovered on the site of Carthage in 1860.[1] Its fragments, fairly complete in themselves, represent a little above a quarter of the whole, but, the entire centre and two sides being lost, they are insufficient to certify the whole scheme of the design. The figures of its subjects seem to mark it as the floor of a sacred place; and being all female, they suggest that place to have been the temple of a female deity. Large female busts in circular medallions fill the four corners, and full-length figures fill the isolated panels of the ground, set like independent pictures among scrolling foliage. Only three of these remain. Two of them stand in graceful attitudes, presenting gifts on their altars, and a third is dancing before an altar to the music of her castinets.

The special interest of this great work is derived from the evidence it affords of being a relic of ancient Carthage. It lay more than ten feet below the ground level,[2] beneath a bed of burnt materials, with two other mosaic floors at different levels above it. There are no glass tesseræ in it, as in other undoubted Roman mosaics about the same neighbourhood, but all are

[1] It is now set up in the British Museum with others from Carthage, Utica, Halicarnassus, Ephesus, etc.

[2] *Carthage and her Remains*, p. 213. Dr. N. Davis. London, 1861.

cut from valuable stones and marbles of a marvellous variety, and set both as to their foundation and cement in a manner different from the Roman. The well-known features of Roman mosaics, with their strong generic likeness, do not occur here; the borders and frames, whether the Vitruvian, the fret, the plait, or the guilloche, are not found here; and instead of the usual schemes of concentric circles, or of round octagons and hexagons set in borders, as in Roman designs, this great pavement has a number of independent subjects in eight parts divided by long pyramidal masses of bay or laurel leaves growing upwards to the centre. This artistic treatment differs from any known mosaic, and the style and costume of the figures is neither Greek nor Roman.

The interpretation of its figures would vary according to their being regarded as Punic or Roman; in the former case they would be simply representative, in the latter they might be symbolic; for instance, one of the heads of the remaining corner medallions would, if Punic, be simply that of Ceres, but if Roman it might serve as the symbol of summer. An authority[1] whose opinion on these subjects is greatly respected, taking this latter view, regards the two heads at the angles as two of the seasons, and the three remaining figures by their altars as three of the months, the dancing figure being April, the month of Venus, the *draped* statuette, of which only the lower quarter remains on the altar, being taken to represent that goddess; the other two figures being assigned to March and July; and he supplies the other nine by analogy drawn from other classes of works of art, and he supplies ideally the centre of this pavement to complete the scheme.

But why not Punic? The various particulars already specified are devoid of all Roman character.

[1] A. W. Franks. *Recent Excavations at Carthage.* London, 1860.

The two grand female heads at the angles might with equal propriety be assigned to Ceres and Dido, and those that are lost to Anna, the deified sister of Dido, and Proserpine, the daughter of Ceres, all being divinities of the ancient Carthaginian Pantheon. The full-length female figures standing or dancing before their altars, are both in attitude and occupation appropriately priestesses; and as for any hesitation about Carthage possessing mosaics, its early association with Greeks and their arts in Sicily, and acquaintance with Greek art through Phœnicia and her mother-city Tyre, would have made her acquainted with mosaic as a perfected art in common use a century at least before it was even heard of in Rome. Carthage was destroyed B.C. 146; but the nations she had long known by the intercourse of a common civilisation had been the most famous centres of the world's arts; and commanding the commerce of the world, she would equally have commanded its arts, and have thrown that genius and ambition, which characterise her history, into them also.

The exceeding paucity of mosaics of the second and third centuries B.C., of which any knowledge has been preserved, beside the famous "aserotos oikos" described by Pliny, and those which lined the great ship of Hiero, has affected general opinion with a sense of blank, as though the art had produced nothing else; but it must be apparent that such a work as that of Sosos at Pergamos, or the other at Syracuse, could not have been solitary masterpieces in the midst of waste. Perfect works such as those could only have come of great attainment in the art around them and elsewhere. They stand out like two stars in a dark heaven, but only because contemporary and subsequent works have perished. Carthage was the city of highest cultivation at that time, and mosaic was the common heritage of its age. This great work is altogether

unique; and for the numerous reasons I have stated, I venture to suggest as not unreasonable to regard it as a relic of ancient Carthage, possibly of the same age or a little subsequent to the famous pavements of Pergamos, and the work of either Greek, Phœnician, or Punic artists.[1]

England also abounds with mosaics from north to south, from the banks of the Humber to the Welsh Caerleon, recalling the memories of those of Europe and Africa, wherever the Romans have settled, for where they were, there were mosaics. More might have been rescued from the havoc of time and ignorance had their value been known; but, like so much beside art, their interest is in their associations, which

[1] In the limited space and in such a broad review of the whole subject as this essay alone pretends to be, it is impossible to do more than select out of the hundreds of mosaics, classic and Christian, which exist, certain prominent and illustrative examples. It is equally out of reach to enter fully into archæological controversy for the same reasons; but with regard to this particular pavement I must add that in judging of the date by the style of any mosaic, it must be remembered that the similarity of materials and form of tesseræ, from their origin in the stones and marbles of the neighbourhood, or accessible by commerce, would remain almost identical in any one place from beginning to end. And further, this art having been derived even by Rome entirely from Greek sources, and all its earliest artists as well, certain favourite types and modes of producing artistic effects (such as flesh and the shadows of flesh) would, in an art so much dependent on traditional uses, be likely to remain a common property of its artists for centuries. Thus, for instance, the head of Ceres in this mosaic bearing some similitude to one at Cirencester is easily explained by the original of them both having been a favourite model from some great work copied many times in many places, as the Madonna della Seggiola is copied and repeated now nearly 400 years since it was designed. All the remains of this great mosaic are in the British Museum, and near it are some very fine specimens of Roman work from Carthage, Utica, and Boudrum (Halicarnassus). The particulars of these last are given in the Report of the excavations at Boudrum, presented to Parliament in 1858, page 34. Of the former the colossal head of Neptune, the hunting scenes, a mounted man catching a deer in a lasso, and a mosaic picture of a basket of fish thrown out upon the ground, are among the most remarkable. There is also a very fine mosaic slab representing a triton with fish floating about him, and a dolphin carrying a trident from a Roman building within the peribolus of the temple of Diana at Ephesus.

imply both that knowledge and feeling which turn archæology into romance, and all the more fascinating because it is all true. These broken relics of old times are precious pages. These remnants of old mosaics in our land mark the spots where men, whose names still live in classic history and literature, once passed a stirring life of war and enterprise, where they summoned councils and held their courts; or, in times of peace, gathered their families about them and laid for their former foes the foundations of the best civilisation that they knew.

The position occupied by ancient London both for defence and commerce was too clearly marked to escape the observation of the Romans; but the interest of its history in their times would have no place here did not the beauty of its mosaics arrest our attention, and warm the imagination to realise in idea the scenes those silent floors once witnessed: a history that was but written upon air. In modern times the excavation of walls and alteration of streets have revealed those relics of a past age; and when we read the familiar names of Bishopsgate Street, Leadenhall Street, Lombard Street, the India House, Threadneedle Street, and The Exchange, and see or hear about the mosaics that have been found beneath or near them, the changes, which centuries of life have wrought, strike us with their startling contrasts, as those tessellated floors reveal the fact that where now the strife of the world's commerce rages round its crowded centre, was once the quiet Belgravian suburb of Roman London.

Of all the parts of England that bear witness to Roman residence, Gloucestershire appears to have been a favourite. The grassy dells of the Cotteswolds afforded them a scenery which, perhaps, the undeveloped sense of landscape in those days may have failed to interest; but they settled there, and have left

along the whole length from the Painswick beacon to the hills and valleys westward of Dursley the relics of many of their homes. It was a tempting site for them. The wide hunting ground of the Cotteswold country was behind them, and their city Corinium, the modern Cirencester, at the junction of their principal roads, was within easy reach; Aquasolis (Bath) also and Caerleon, and their "castra exploratoria" on the points of all the hills. The great military establishment at Glevum (the modern Gloucester) lay in the valley below them, on the bank of the meandering Severn; and far beyond, the country of the Silures, the scene of their great campaign, stretched out into the wide distance, blending the woods and hills of its horizon with the mists of the setting sun.

Here in one of its loveliest spots, now Woodchester, a palace was built, which from the evidence of its extent and wealth was one of much importance. Its historian has with most reasonable inference traced here the site of imperial residence, where Claudius and Hadrian trod its tessellated floors. Ostorius Scapula was Proprætor of Britain under Claudius, and is known to have constructed many "castra" along the Severn valley. Claudius's 7th Legion was for many years stationed at Gloucester, and this favoured spot, Woodchester, afforded precisely the central and secure position required for the governor's residence. Its great central open court was an atrium of all but fifty feet square. The mosaic of its pavement is one of the largest known, and though coarsely executed, it exhibits all the best features of Roman mosaic art of that period. The ground of it is a warm white, and within a grandly-designed border is one large circle divided into several rings with an octagonal centre. The central figure is lost; but Orpheus, who commonly occupies that place, is here delineated within one of the

inner circles, with animals and birds duly tamed by his music quietly following each other all round. The colour is rich and simple; and the materials which are mostly of local production have, for the purest white tesseræ, the hard calcareous stone imported for the purpose, the same as is found in Roman mosaics in various parts of Europe. It is approached by a corridor 114 feet long and 9 broad, from end to end mosaic; and in various directions are the foundations of rooms, of which the evidences of their once tessellated floors still remain. The character of the latest of these pavements is of a style that would date about the reign of Septimius Severus; and in relation to that emperor a coincidence is worthy of remark, that a group of figures ornamenting the floor of one of the rooms, is that of two genii, without wings, but in the attitude of flying, carrying between them a basket of fruit, and inlaid below them is the motto "Bonum Eventum"—a motto that is found on the reverse of coins of that emperor and of his son Geta. He remained some time in England, and this device seems to bring him to this spot, the floor having been thus inlaid in honour of his residence.[1]

Of the numerous relics of Roman mosaic in England it is hard to pass over such fine specimens as those at Littlecote in Wiltshire, at Stonesfield near Blenheim, at Cirencester, and other places, but three will suffice to illustrate their best characteristics, viz. those at Frampton, Horkstow, and Bignor, of which the two first contain symbols which seem to associate them with the earliest Christian age in Britain.

[1] For description and illustration of these and other important mosaics in England *vide* Lysons's *Woodchester*, published 1797, and his *Reliquiæ Britannico-Romanæ*, London, 1801. Also Fowler's *Illustrations of Mosaics in all Parts of England*, published in 1810. Roach Smith's *Roman London* and *Collectanea Antiqua*, and journals of principal archæological societies, etc.

The contrast between the grandly artistic schemes on which the floors are laid out, and the ignorance of drawing and detail in the execution of most of them, have inevitably suggested their derivation from some good sources, of which the original cartoons have perished. The mosaicists seem in most cases to have been skilled artisans of a superior class, furnished with a store of designs and patterns common to the architectural style of the time; and with these as their "stock" they gave to their repetitions of them the appearance of originality by the ingenious variety of their combinations. Human figures, birds and beasts, gods and goddesses, often designed in admirable attitudes, but blundered to the utmost in execution, are accounted for on the same theory; thus, no two mosaics, though containing every element the same, appear actually alike.

There are, however, two remarkable exceptions, viz. those at Bignor in Sussex and at Avenches in Switzerland, where not only the unique circumstance occurs of each having a bath or cistern in their centre, but the evidence of both pavements having been in great part taken from the same original cartoons, is plain from the similarity of the figures, which is so great as to extend even to their faults in drawing and proportion. Avenches, where the great mosaic measures 55 French feet long by 36 broad, owed its importance to its strategical or otherwise convenient position during the wars with Germany, and flourished under the patronage of Vespasian and Titus, which affords a clue to its probable date. The mosaic at Bignor corresponds with this date, and being somewhat Pompeian in character, its ornaments differ both in style and arrangement from most others in England, and present an appearance of greater antiquity.

The several pavements of this place, ruinous as

their condition now is, have such peculiar interest that it is a regrettable necessity in a sketch of the history of the art such as this, that only the main features of any one example can find place. These at Bignor are probably the earliest of Roman mosaics of any importance in Britain. Their extent implies the decoration of the rooms of a governor's residence, the capital of whose province was the modern Chichester, from which it is about twelve miles distant. The pavements have suffered very greatly from wilful as well as accidental injury. The usual Roman combination of circles within squares form the general scheme of the designs, of which the smaller circle is occupied by the figure of Ganimede carried by the eagle, and the larger one divided into hexagons contains dancing nymphs, which recall to mind the paintings of Pompeii. The mimic gladiators which occupy the four small compartments of another floor are unique in England; as are also the two labyrinths in another part. These gladiators are winged children. The panels of each subject measure 2 feet 9 by 16 inches, and contain in miniature the complete arrangement of the gladiatorial combat. In the first the little figures stand in two groups preparing for the fight, which is to be that between the retiarius and the mirmillo, the former being armed with a net and trident, the latter with a sword and shield. Each is attended by a veteran gladiator, the rudiarius, whose business was to instruct and assist the rising genius. The attendant of the mirmillo is lifting the helmet to the young gladiator's head, while his shield rests on the ground before him; and he wears the orthodox grieve on his left leg. His adversary with his net and trident is dressed with a cassula over his tunic, and has his head correctly bare. He seems to shrink a little as his friendly rudiarius leads him to the contest. In the next compartment

the retiarius is evidently pressed hard, and his friend comes to the rescue. In the last he is fallen disarmed and wounded in the thigh. In another part of the pavement is a remarkable female bust, that can be none other than that of Venus, crowned with a chaplet of flowers, the tresses of her hair falling over her bare shoulders. As a goddess she has a light-blue nimbus over her head, and takes the place of the Bacchus with his blue nimbus also, on the pavement at Avenches; cornucopia, festoons, and birds decorate the surrounding space.

At a distant part of England from this, near the mouth of the Humber, is one of the most important mosaics in England, at Harkstow. It was discovered in 1796 close to the Roman road from Lincoln to the river, near the station Prætorium of the first stage of Antonine's *Itinerary*. In the central circle of the main floor sits Orpheus with his lyre, wearing the usual Phrygian bonnet, with a peacock at his side, and attendant animals, the hare and dog, bear, boar, and elephant; birds of various kinds, among which are doves with coloured wings, make up the company. The four spandrels or corners of this and the adjoining square are remarkable, the one from its four male busts drawn in brown outline upon the white ground, and having on each side of them the Christian symbol of the cross inlaid in red tesseræ. The corresponding angles of the adjacent floor are not occupied by Titans, as they have been described, but by demoniacal figures with outstretched arms holding up the edges of the central circle, their bodies painted black and red, and having in place of legs huge coiling snakes with red crests and fiery tongues; demons of unrest in significant contrast with the calm Christian busts hard by. The great circle of this floor is beautifully arranged with graceful groups of figures in four large blue medallions,

with nereids, tritons, and marine creatures between them, and winged genii dancing and waving wreaths round the small central circle of which the subject is lost.

If, as is possible from those symbolic representations, this was the floor of a Christian establishment, the pagan character of the rest is only in common with all early mosaics ; the mosaicist having none other for it than his usual stock of subjects.

Next to this is a spirited mosaic picture of a Biga race. Four chariots are engaged, and two mounted men accompany them. The chariots are apparently of light straw plait like beehives, or of wickerwork, and the drivers kneel in them. One is upset, with its wheel broken off, and a horseman, dismounted, stretches forward to save the falling charioteer. The horse of another is in the act of falling headlong, and the other two are at full speed. The charioteers are not clothed with the orthodox colours, but are red and buff, and their horses are chestnut, brown, black, and bay. The spina dividing the course is plainly drawn, and the meta at each end of it is surmounted with two pyramids.

Only one other Roman mosaic in England need be mentioned, perhaps the most interesting of all, that at Frampton near Dorchester. Here there are pavements of three rooms of important size connected by long corridors with mosaic floors throughout. The design of one of these (an oblong of 30 × 20 feet) is characterised by the prevailing idea of Deity overcoming evil. One figure, very rarely found, is that of Mars Pacifer, the symbol of war waged for the sake of peace, dressed like a Roman soldier, wearing the Phrygian cap of liberty, but with an olive-tree growing beside him, and an olive branch in his hand. Another is Neptune spiking with his trident a sea monster who

is attacking him from below. A third is Apollo killing the Python, represented as a snake coiled on a tree and in the attitude of attack. A fourth is the peaceful Bacchus, filling the place, which would otherwise have been properly filled by the more pugnacious Vulcan. A second pavement at the end of a long passage is altogether in honour of Neptune, its panelled hexagons and octagons being filled with figures of nereids and dolphins and busts of men holding long spiral shells as sceptres.

The principal room is of basilican form of three compartments, the main body being a square with a narrow oblong projecting from one side and uniting it to a semicircular apse. The ornamental border of the square is filled with dolphins and with the head of Oceanus as a central medallion in it on the side toward the apse. In the centre of the oblong is the monogram of Christus in its central circle, the rest of the space being filled with scrolling foliage. The apse has at its extremity an oblong panel of plain tesseræ, as if to mark the place for a statue, a throne, or an altar. A vase in its centre is its only ornament.

The form and ornamentation of this floor suggests that the apartment was one of importance dedicated either to judicial or religious use; if to the former, the apse would have been the place of the Prætorian chair; if the latter, it would have contained the statue of the god; and to judge by the figures and emblems throughout the mosaics of this extensive palace, this would have been Neptune; and the prominent Christian monogram, the subject of Constantine's vision, and of the labarum of his army, would have been inserted when Christianity was proclaimed; the statue in the apse giving place to the altar, and the temple consecrated as a British church.

ESSAY VI—*Continued*

MOSAIC

PART II—CHRISTIAN

THE adoption of Christianity marked the beginning of a new era in this art, not by a revolution in its practice or its purpose, but by the new direction given to them both. Both use and motive indeed remained the same; for whether to adorn a palace for its owner's pleasure or to aid devotion in a sacred place, the springs of the artist's energy and the motives for his art's employment were the same; but the source of those springs was changed, and the force of his motive was initiated elsewhere. In ornamental art the joy of human life had still to be served, and in sacred places the ideal of Deity had still to be glorified; but the aspect and aspirations of his life were changed. So the arts, those methods of men's hearts' expression, were changed too, not in nature but in voice, with new purposes to serve, new thoughts to tell, and new inspirations to obey.

Practically such a change could not be at once exhibited. Works were continually required, but the designs made in this new spirit were not immediately forthcoming. It needed time to formulate the representative ideas on which such designs could be realised. So the result was inevitable, as illustrated by such

works as the mosaics in the church of Santa Costanza at Rome, which some critics have disposed of as pagan, some as Christian, but which were in fact that union of both that was unavoidable in a work ordered by the first Christian Emperor at his daughter's request, and executed to the best of their power by mosaicists who took what they could and what they knew best, to please their Imperial patrons, like the well-instructed scribe who brought out of his treasures things both new and old.

Thus was adopted at once that employment of mosaic which distinguished the general use of it under Christian from that of pagan influences, the latter having assigned its finest works to floors, the former to walls and ceilings. Not indeed that such was the universal practice, for from Aosta and Siena to Rheims and Cologne the pavements of Christian buildings have been enriched with pictorial representations of the best that their day could produce; but the general tendency has prevailed to apply to floors the mechanical designs of inlaid marbles, and to lavish on the walls and vaulting the whole glory of the artist's genius. The ever-quoted examples of Ravenna and Constantinople show this. The basilicas of Monreale in Sicily, of the Lateran at Rome, and of St. Mark's at Venice are splendid with all that the wealth of marble and ingenuity of device could spread upon their floors; but for their walls and vaulting are reserved those masterpieces of the art with which only poetry and devotion could combine to clothe them.

At Sour, near to the traditional tomb of King Hiram, the friend of Solomon, on a site that once was a necropolis, in the neighbourhood of the ancient city of Tyre, has been found a mosaic floor of a small Christian church, of which the consecration to St. Christopher, as commemorated by an inscription, set

in marble tesseræ, has a peculiar significance, from this being the country to which has been assigned the birthplace of that mythic Saint whose colossal figure, bearing the infant Christ upon his shoulder, has made the subject of so many wall paintings in the mediæval churches of western Christendom. The fabric of this church exists no more, but its foundations show it to have had a central nave and two side aisles; and, with the exception of their three apses, their entire floors remain, though saved from theft and injury only by a few inches of garden soil. Judging by its style, it would belong to the age of Constantine (as a central date), the design of it recalling the motives which characterise part of the vaulting of Santa Costanza's church and of the Lateran baptistery at Rome, and the ground of part of the great floor at Italica (already described), which would have preceded it, and the beautiful mosaic pavement of the Christian basilica at D'Jemila, in Algeria, which would follow it. The system of covering spaces with numerous circles, containing figures of all sorts of animals, birds, little winged genii, reptiles, and sprigs of leaves, was a favourite device at that period. Indeed, so entirely was this ideal of ornament received as of right taste and universal propriety, even in sacred buildings, that a little after the reign of Constantine the writer and statesman Olympiodorus, seeking advice from St. Nilus about the decoration of the interior of a church, suggested that the walls on each side of the sanctuary should be ornamented with figures of animals and fish, with incidents of the chase, and "histories of all kinds of birds and beasts, reptiles and plants." The Saint's reply, objecting and suggesting a higher order of iconography, shows how Christian influence soon prevailed to stop this system of decoration, which after the fifth century is rarely if ever found, except in very modified form, as

at Rome, Aosta, and Rheims, and other places, where the circle, as a natural form for medallions, was employed, but where they were filled, not with animal forms for want of anything better, but with such, whether of things, persons, fish, animals, and birds, as had some symbolic reference to Christianity, or the moral of human life, of which the calendar, with its ring of circular medallions, was a simple and favourite illustration.

The mosaic at Sour is a complete illustration of the style of its age. The principal pavement of the nave, of oblong form, is a work of great refinement; the general design being that of traditional simplicity, with a vase at each angle, from which plants grew, forming, with their branches, numerous small circles, filled with precisely such a scheme of figures, taken from the animal world, as St. Nilus at a later time rejected. In the central circle (of thirty) is drawn, much in the same spirit as the vintage mosaic of Santa Costanza, a group of two children, apparently playing musical instruments—one sitting, the other standing, in a wine-press, with a tub in front to catch the grape juice, and at the back, rising above the heads of the children, a tall cross. The rest of the circles are filled with animals playing or fighting, such as a fox at full speed carrying a cock on his back, a lion seizing a stag, and a snake and a squirrel, to judge by their expressive figures, startled at their sudden meeting. There are also single figures of children hunting, and one engaged in the less exciting occupation of dragging an unwilling donkey loaded with panniers. A double row of circles, with guilloche borders, fill the side aisles, containing busts of figures representing the four seasons, the twelve months, and the four winds, each distinguished by its name in Greek; and numerous pairs of animals, birds and fish.[1]

[1] The inscription forming part of this pavement has led to much controversy. It states that *the church* was dedicated at a date corresponding

The continuance of the same traditional use, borrowed from classical designs, of the forms of animals

to A.D. 652-3; and it is added that "the whole work of this mosaic ('to panergon tes Psephosios') was included in the dedication." The question is about the date of this pavement. The inscription does not specify the pavement ("Lithostrotos"), but mosaic work ("Psephosis"). Had the Greek writer of the inscription referred specially to the pavement he would have written "Lithostrotos," which was the word universally adopted by the Greek translators of the Septuagint at Alexandria for mosaic pavements. "Psephosis" was the Greek for mosaic in its largest sense as applied to tessellated architectural work by the Greeks of Constantinople; but when a novel employment of tessellation for small pictures and minute ornaments, used like jewelry upon dresses, became the fashion in the time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, another name appeared necessary for its designation, and the words "mousakion," "mousaion," and others, from "mousa," were applied to it.[1]

By its style this pavement, which has not a single Byzantine feature in it, would reasonably be assigned to the date mentioned in the text. The materials of the inscription being of similar material to the rest is no sufficient argument for identity of date. The whole character of it, and of the Greek letters used in it, is absolutely distinct. It almost speaks for itself, and suggests what appears to me a simple explanation. The churches of Palestine were at that date (652), under Byzantine influence, habitually decorated with mosaics throughout; and the persons effecting so grand a work as that in their own style would have cared but little for the pavement, then 300 years old, of a style associated with pagan traditions, and being probably that of one of the many small churches erected in Syria by Constantine or his mother, St. Helena. Mosaic was so common in the seventh century that indifference would easily have led these advanced mosaicists to ignore the old pavement in comparison with their own great work of covering the interior walls with sacred subjects. Thus, on dedicating the church anew to St. Christopher, their idea of "all this mosaic work" ("psephosis") was what they had just done. Their tesseræ would have been all of glass, and just such as despoilers would have certainly robbed, having subsequently become in great demand for the walls and dadoes of Mahomedan mosques. For the pavement of their church those mosaicists of the seventh century would not have employed tessellation, but that mixed mosaic of sectile and Alexandrian work then universally in fashion in the East, as at Thessalonica, Constantinople, and other places; and in that manner they would have paved the three apses with slabs and inlays of valuable marbles, which also recommended themselves to the same robbers for the same purpose when the whole fabric was destroyed and pillaged by the victorious Moslems. The sand soon swept over the old tessellated pavement, and garden soil has preserved it till our time. So the inscription and its date relate to the large work on the walls, which has entirely perished, and not to the pavement into which it had been inlaid, in a totally different style of design from the more ancient part described in the text.

[1] Const. Porphyr. *De Ceremon. aulæ Byzantinæ.*

and plants in the decoration of Christian buildings at that period, is beautifully illustrated in a somewhat similar floor in the early African church at D'Jemila in Algeria. The scheme of the design as an architectural ornament is faultless; more thoroughly geometrical than the principal pavement at Sour, with interlacing borders enclosing circles surrounded with octagonal wreaths of bay leaves, containing in the centre of each, on a white ground, birds and animals, drawn in quiet attitudes, and including the elephant, camel, and ostrich, apparently selected from such as were natural to Africa; the one exception of symbolic reference to Christianity being the dove carrying the olive branch.

A very different class of art was now begun at the two imperial centres, Rome and Constantinople. Christianity was now free, and the mosaics upon the walls and vaults of its sacred places were spread as vast pictures illustrating the incidents of its history and faith. The great mosaics of the first nine centuries in the churches at Rome have been so often and so well described that their very names are as household words in the history of art. They need no repetition here (for my purpose is rather historical than descriptive), nor scarcely any notice beyond that of the testimony they bear to the gradual decline of the artistic spirit of their age, and the struggle it made to live; sometimes rising, at least in the poetry of religious intention, as in the dignified portraiture of the apse of Santa Pudeziana, and the sacred symbolism in that of SS. Cosmo and Damian; at another time failing in all artistic sense, as in the ill-composed and worse-drawn subjects which surmount, from end to end, the grand architectural avenue of S. Maria Maggiore; and sinking at last to its lowest depth in the stolid figures which signalise the very death of art in the apse of SS. Nereus and Achilleus.

The Romans—unhappy in their fallen state, the fatal wreck of ancient pride, deserted by their emperors, distracted by internal disorder and continuous war, their city reduced to a dependency of Ravenna, taken and sacked by Goths, Vandals and Heruli; ruined and impoverished in men and means, and completing a period of alternating pillage and servitude during little less than a century and a half, at last to find itself, about the middle of the sixth century, the vassal of the East—had lost all spirit for the finer arts of life. What little original power they had ever possessed in them had now been crushed by national disaster, and a darkness had fallen upon them that was not to be lifted for centuries. Individuals there doubtless were, lovers of the arts of peace, who, in the quieter moments of that distracted life, had clung to the associations of happier days, and had maintained some traditions of their arts; but there is no record and but little evidence of them left. The Church, their only source of comfort and quiet occupation, employed them at various intervals of time, but under masters from elsewhere whom the East or the Exarchate could spare.

The works of this art in Rome, spread over a period of four centuries, with various fortune, and sometimes with long intervals of sleep, were but of inferior class to what was being produced elsewhere. The collapse of all original power in art was evident from the repetition of the same subject in four different churches, each inferior to its predecessor; and at last, by the monopoly of all art in the hands of artists from the East, who, regardless of Rome, adopted in their works Greek inscriptions, attitudes, costumes, and compositions, the gorgeous ornament of oriental taste in their accessories, as their favourite saint, S. Agnese, was displayed in the splendid dress and

jewelry of an Eastern empress; and at last so entirely Greek as, under the eyes of Roman pontiffs, to figure the Saviour in the Greek attitude of benediction. The interest which the mosaics at Rome arouse since the fifth century, when the last great work had been realised in the church of SS. Cosmo and Damian, is dashed with the melancholy of declining life. That church once exhibited in its triumphal arch and apse a glorious work of architectural painting in mosaic; but the building was subsequently altered, and the fine completeness of its mosaic picture was destroyed by diminution of its walls. It had doubtless from the first a certain severity of character which the types and habits of the Gothic invaders had introduced, and the Byzantine spirit had stereotyped on its composition; but the original effect of it must have been exceedingly grand. It possessed no single element of old Roman pictorial composition; but broad and simple in its arrangement of numerous groups of figures, with that of Christ for the centre, on which the whole scheme culminated, it was also embellished with such beauty of religious symbolism as filled this vast composition with the deepest and most affecting interest. Above, upon the wall over the apse, is the figure of the Lamb of God lying upon a jewelled altar, with the cross above it, and the seven golden candlesticks standing on either side. Below, in the form of a frieze, at the base of the whole composition, the figurative river Jordan flows forth, and on its bank the Lamb stands, with six others approaching Him from either side out of the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, emblematic of the churches of the Old and New Testaments, from opposite directions, united in Himself. To the comparatively rude spectators of those days of darkness and trouble it must have been like an open

book of sublime poetry, heightened by the inspirations of the purest piety, with a glory of effect that seemed to break upon them from heaven. In its original condition it was wider, and supported on each side beneath by those grandly-conceived groups of glorified martyrs, in white robes, presenting their crowns to Christ, as the copy of this subject in the same position in the church of Santa Prassede still represents them.

It is the completeness of the composition thus secured on the walls of Santa Prassede that, in spite of its great inferiority, produced so grand an effect. This repetition (with a few changes among the figures) was made about A.D. 820, little short of 300 years after the original in SS. Cosmo and Damian, and twice again, at each time marred by the evidences of rapidly declining art, in the churches of S. Cecilia and S. Mark.

The iconoclastic edicts of Leo the Tsaurian in A.D. 726 at Constantinople gave such a blow to art as it never recovered till the revival in the twelfth century. Many of the best artists migrated. Some came to Rome and established themselves in a college known as the Schola Greca, close to a church which received the name of S. Maria in Cosmedia from the beauty of their works in it; but though their influence is very evident, there is no distinct reference to them in the records of any important work which followed. It was not till the time of Leo III., about half a century later, that any energy was thrown into this art. This friend of Charlemagne was in his sphere a worthy coadjutor of the Emperor, and as active in the employment of the arts as in all else, but the best of the mosaics executed for him have perished. One only of the most important, the triclinium of the Lateran palace, is still seen in its original place, in part the copy in part the restored remnant of what fire, accident, and neglect had

left, and the much injured portraits of the Pope and the Emperor, now preserved in the Vatican.

But "the stars in their courses fought against" the arts, and anarchy and barbarism were spreading their deep shadows over society and government. All art that could properly be called Italian had died out heart-broken, and in all that related to it, the Greek influence, depressed and depressing, became more and more pronounced. The weak hands to whom it had been relinquished could produce no warmth to save the expiring flames. Still even in the feebleness of its waning life there had been in the very nature of mosaic a quality and effect of massiveness and breadth that saved it in great degree from the offences to which other arts were liable; but even that grandeur, which results from simplicity and solemnity alone, gradually sank into gloom; and at last all its tenderer elements of beauty disappeared, as the songs of birds die away before the deepening chills of winter.

In the meantime another phase of art had been developed at Constantinople, the phase of splendour. The natural disposition of its eastern people, the haste and reckless cost of a new centre of civilised life, artificially excited, infused it with the prevailing energy. The art of mosaic with which only we are here concerned, had to take its part in the universal indulgence of display, and contributed its quota of magnificence by the effect of gold, spread over vast architectural spaces as the background of its coloured subjects. The origin of these gold backgrounds was probably no more than a new phase of what had been a practice among the arts of ancient Byzantium, and in reality due to the extensive use of gold plates in the more ancient oriental decoration. Gold tesseræ had long been used at Rome, but not as grounds for pictures. The East afforded no precedent for gold ground mosaic, nor had

it been used in classic Greece, but plates of gold and architecture overlaid with gold, as distinguished from gilding, had been for centuries the recognised mode of regal and religious decoration in those Eastern lands which had been the first nurseries of the arts. The ruins of Chaldæan architecture have afforded the evidence of towers and façades having thus been plated with gold, and of walls of rooms ornamented with gold plates in the place of pictures. The facility for such splendour of effect was now immediately at hand in the gilt glass tesseræ for mosaics; their cost was comparatively *nil*, their extent unlimited, and the opportunity of display was all that could be desired by the gorgeous taste of the imperial founders and citizens of Constantinople.

The conversion of Byzantium into the imperial city of Constantinople gave such a spring to the arts as seemed to promise their revival in force. The energy of novelty, the ambition of wealth, the motive power of a new religious ideal, and all else that could contribute to stir artistic enthusiasm were concentrated on that favoured spot. Ancient Greece was despoiled of its treasures, and what Rome had left was accumulated at Constantinople. But the models of antiquity had no elements, but those of abstract beauty, in common with the part that fine art was now called upon to play. Their beauty was transcendent and their forms perfect, and they had reached the acme of what human genius could effect for the glory of their own ideal. Those works might glorify a city and satisfy the display an oriental population loved. They had sprung from an enthusiasm common to all mankind, and had risen to be idolised by it, but their very perfection was a bar to progress. Genius had exhausted itself upon them. They had told their tale and had finished their special ministry. The happiness they gave they could give

still, and would give as long as their frail materials would last. All that was pure and beautiful in them, all that their rich eloquence could speak of what was common to the divine element in humanity, was and ever would be theirs, but art had now other demands to meet, and, as of old, so still must she draw from the same Nature the models of her works, but a Nature seen under a new aspect and with all the circumstances of its life actuated by other motives and pointing to another destiny.

Constantine was a great builder, and pre-eminently of churches, and in all of them mosaic or inlaid marbles were the chief mode of ornament. Eusebius describes, perhaps with too great fervour, the emperor's great basilica at Jerusalem, as exhibiting a splendour only comparable to what the prophets had foretold of the new Jerusalem; the walls were inlaid with marbles, and were enriched with gold, silver, and precious stones. But little remains of any mosaics that can be with certainty attributed to him, beside the Roman church of Santa Costanza and of the Lateran baptistery; for those of the first S. Peter's at Rome, at Constantinople, and Jerusalem have perished.

The history of Constantinople was one of trouble and disturbance. The palace of Constantine was burnt, and a time of general displacement and restlessness followed the reign of its founder, till the city rose again in greatness and beauty in the days of Justinian. He too was a mighty builder of palaces and churches. Next to the imperial palace, of which nothing but magnificent description remains, the church of the Holy Apostles had been the most important work of Constantine. It was the first built in the form of the cross, with a long nave and a dome over the centre, covered with bronze. His tomb was under this dome, and the whole interior was coated with rich marbles. It was

ruined by an earthquake, and its place is now occupied by the mosque of Mahomet II. A nobler edifice now rose under the auspices of Justinian, dedicated to Holy Wisdom in the centre of his renovated city, to be its glory for all time—Agia Sophia. Its foundation stone was laid on the 23d of February 531. The arts broke forth anew, pressed into the service of this great building, and among them, as sculpture was not yet realised in its Christian sense, and painting had been relegated to the humbler sphere of the easel and illumination, architecture and mosaic reigned supreme. The interior of Santa Sophia by the harmonised elements of space, power, and grace, presents the sublimest effect of which its style of architecture is capable. The modes and forms of architectural grandeur are severally distinct, incomparable, and unique. The monuments of Egypt, the temples of Greece, the cathedrals of Europe have each their own, and are each supremely expressive of their own intent. This wondrous Agia Sophia was absolutely unique ; and for the purpose of worship in a faith that realised to the imagination the sublimest conceptions of Deity, this work of purest art fulfilled and satisfied all aspirations.

Its vast dome is constructed with a number of narrow ribs, richly coloured, and with plain spaces of gold between them rising to a central circle, now painted over, but originally filled in mosaic with a colossal figure of Christ seated in majesty, the ray-shaped golden spaces of the dome, which are now meaningless, forming then a splendid glory radiating over the whole vast space, as though they emanated from the central figure. Below it the four corner pendentives, from which the dome springs, are covered with the wings of four gigantic cherubim, thus completing the sublime conception of the central subject. The figure of Christ is described by those who saw it long

ago as seated within a rainbow (in iride) expressive of the "rainbow *round about* the throne;" and, if we may be allowed to complete the picture by analogy from others elsewhere, this rainbow surrounded the circular panel, as, in the form of a vesica, it was commonly used in subsequent times, and whether on a blue ground, as in another part of the church, or on gold, the central figure was seated not upon a throne, as it is in the narthex, but upon a globe iridescent with stars.[1] The figure of the globe had been known in very ancient art as the symbol of eternity and the universe, but its acceptance and conversion to Christian art as an appropriate symbol, and as the throne of One who was its creative Word and final Judge, had not been seen before. This grand idea, found in other works of immediately subsequent date, must have had some great exemplar, and none more likely than this in a building from which so much has been copied and repeated in all directions. This mode of composing the subject of the Majesty is found in mosaic in the church of S. Vitale at Ravenna, which was built after the model of Santa Sophia and ornamented by the same school of mosaicists. It is found also at Rome over the great arch of the basilica of San Lorenzo, dating from a few years only after Santa Sophia, and in the apse of St. Theodore, and in the seventh century mosaic work of the lateral apse of Santa Costanza, and in the baptistery of San Giovanni at Florence in a mosaic by Andrea Tafi, in the thirteenth century. It is also found in other forms of art, such as in Byzantine, ivory carv-

[1] Du Cange's *Historia Byzantina*, book iii., page 30, edition 1680. "In interiore Tholi, seu ut vocant Trulli, centro ac Testitudine, Justinianus opere musivo Christum *in iride* sedentem orbis judicantis effigie, describi curavit ut *αυτοπται* testantur." "In the inner central part and dome of the cupola, or as they call it, Trullus, Justinian caused to be represented in mosaic work Christ within a rainbow seated after the fashion of one judging the world, as the very eye-witnesses testify."

ing,[1] where the figure is seated on a globe covered with stars, and it was painted by the Giottesque Cavallini in the apse of S. Georgio in Velabro at Rome, in the place of a previously existing mosaic. Many single figures, including all the authors of both the Old and New Testaments, are spread about upon the flat and arched surfaces, but the only important subject visible at the time the interior was being cleaned and repaired in 1847, and of which a coloured drawing was taken,[2] is that of Pentecost, which covers one of the domes of the women's aisle, on the south side. The breadth and grandeur of its composition affords some idea of what the whole interior must have originally displayed. In the crown of this dome Christ sits enthroned with the blue of heaven around Him, enclosed within a broad aureole of gold. From His figure proceed twelve white rays which fall on the heads of the apostles standing around below, and groups of the first Christian disciples fill the four angular spaces from which the cupola springs. As a complete subject it is unique. The best known work in this grand church is that in the narthex, which is one of the finest existing mosaics, exhibiting the typal composition of the Majesty, followed in all succeeding ages from that to the present, in every form of art throughout all Christendom. It is in the lunette over the king's entrance, where on a gold ground the figure of Christ sits on a jewelled throne, in the attitude of blessing with the right hand and holding a book in the left, bearing the inscription on its open pages, "Peace to you, I am the Light of the world." Right and left are circular medallions containing busts of the blessed Virgin and St. Michael, and on the pavement at Christ's feet Justinian crowned prostrates him-

[1] A Byzantine ivory plaque, in the Soltikoff collection figured in Labarte's *Moyen Age*, vol. i. p. 46.

[2] Saltzenberg, *Alt. Christliche . . . von Constantinopel.* Berlin, 1854.

self. Such are shortly the main features of mosaic art at Santa Sophia, the architectural type of all succeeding Christian churches and Mahomedan mosques of the East.

But it is not only in such sites of wealth and government that important works of this art are still to be found. At the foot of Mount Sinai, where tradition assigns the first building to the time of the apostles,[1] in the present church,[2] built, and with its monastery endowed and fortified by Justinian, the eastern wall, arch, and apse are covered with contemporary mosaics from designs adapted to the peculiar interest of the surrounding associations. The church of the monastery, in the wild open desert, the most isolated in the world, with the grand, triple-headed Mount Sinai rising above it, is dedicated to St. Catherine; and over the semicircular vault of the bema in which the relics of the saint are preserved, on the wall high up toward the left, the figure of Moses is represented kneeling before the burning bush; on the right side he stands, having just received the two tables in his hands, a light breaking forth from above, with its rays falling upon him. All detail in these pictures has been obscured by the smoke of the altar candles, accumulated upon them for many centuries; but sufficient can be seen to show that the subject of the Transfiguration fills the vault of the bema. The figure of Christ, with his hands joined upon his breast, stands within an oval aureole, occupying the centre, with those of Moses and Elias, also standing and in the attitude of benediction. On the right and left, separated from these on each side, and within circular medallions, are the portraits of Justinian and Theodora; and the composition is completed by a series of heads within

[1] Neale's *Holy Eastern Church*, vol. i.
[2] *Voyage de l'Arabie Pétrée*, Leon de Laborde.

circular borders, representing the apostles and the chief functionaries of the monastery at the time of its establishment, viz. "the very saintly priest" Longinus and Hugomenos, the name of each being inlaid by every figure. The inscription, beginning with the invocation of the Holy Trinity (not forgetting Mount Sinai here), forms the base line of the whole, supported by the busts of all the prophets of the Old Testament.

Wanting in the peculiar interest of so sacred a site, but interesting and important in their several associations, a great part of the works which that age produced in the important cities of Thessalonica, Trebizond, and Ravenna still remain for our admiration. In the two first-named places there are churches dating certainly from the time of Constantine, even if not earlier, and there are mosaics earlier than the reign of Justinian; but in the principal of those which remain it is evident that the artists followed the style of the masterpieces of Constantinople. They planned no great pictures, nor cared for dramatic action nor historic subject, but peopled their vast golden surfaces of cupola and wall with single figures, each, in his own individual capacity, taking part in some great event; as in the dome of Sa. Sophia at Thessalonica, where, in a double row, the apostles with the blessed Virgin, in the early Christian attitude of prayer, with two angels beside her, stand, as in awe and adoration, witnessing the ascension of Christ, below whose figure and the flying angels supporting the vesica which surrounded it, is inlaid the text, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?" The central figure, with the exception of the feet, has been blotted out and covered with an Arabic text; and, indeed, in most places Mahomedan paint or plaster has hidden the principal figures of Christian iconography.

The church of St. George, a round church in the

same place, has a very different design in its cupola. We see there the architectural background of a sanctuary, with columns, round arches under pediments, and partly closed by looped-up curtains, in front of which stand single figures of ecclesiastics splendidly vested, with their names above them of Saints who died before the time of Constantine—a subject of gorgeous effect, but better suited for a wall than for a cupola.

At Trebizond the fine churches of St. Mary and Sa. Sophia, rich with mosaics and paintings, have been with rare exception covered with whitewash; but the floor of Sa. Sophia is famous for its mosaic pavement of the kind known as Opus Grecanicum,[1] which is an enriched modification of the Roman Opus Alexandrinum, varied with slabs of sectile marble, and richly inlaid, as on the floors of St. Mark's at Venice, St. Lorenzo and Sa. Maria in Trastevere at Rome, Sa. Sophia at Constantinople, and many other places, pre-eminently here at Trebizond.

The buildings and mosaics at Ravenna are too well known, and their story has been too well told, to need repetition; but the great artistic features which characterise them must not be passed without a word. They surprise us indeed by their extent and their technical excellence; but the qualities which at once command our admiration are the grandeur of idea which prevailed throughout and inspired their compositions, the sincerity of their enthusiasm, and an architectonic sense, applying

[1] The so-called Opus Grecanicum, as it is commonly found in Italy, derives great brilliancy from its consisting of coloured marbles set in a white ground, the white marble slabs of the pavement being cut out at a very slight depth according to the pattern required, with marbles and sometimes glass mosaic set in the grooves thus obtained. In this manner also screens, walls, pulpits, and shrines were decorated in mosaic by the famous school of the Cosmati. But Pliny, lxxxvi. ch. 35, describes as "genus Pavimenti Grecanici" an inlaid floor of porphyry and serpentine, which is the essential composition, viz. of purple and green, of the Opus Alexandrinum.

ornament and pictorial design with complete mastery to the forms and effects of architecture. The want of variety in the figures, which form the two long series on the walls of S. Apollinare Nuovo, may be evident to all eyes; but the quiet and stately expression of those dignified figures, following in procession with their crowns in their hands, on one side from the old seaport town of Classe, and on the other from the palace attributed to Theodoric, taken all together as a mode of covering such a wall with an appropriate sacred subject, are worthy of all admiration. On one side male saints and martyrs are conducted to the feet of Christ by the first martyr, St. Stephen.[1] On the other side a procession of female saints in a long row, each with her name above her, approach, not, as too commonly and carelessly described, to the adoration of the blessed Virgin, but, as they are there depicted, following the lead of the three Magi, who bow before the divine Child seated on her knees, and represented in the attitude of blessing, to receive the gifts they present—a subject as old as the art of early Roman catacombs.

The Christian Greek artists delighted in the poetry of symbolic expression, and have so filled our minds with it through their works, that we are apt to pass it by as a matter of course, and to ignore the interest of its original production. The art of their classic ancestors had been constantly enlivened by allusion and emblem, but there was in it no source or motive for such depth of sentiment and awe of expression as the sublime realities of the Christian revelation produced on those who had the handling of its subjects in the forms of fine art. The mosaics of Rome and Ravenna that are traceable to Byzantine artists, or to those influenced by them, are rich in this mode of devotional

[1] Originally so, but that figure has been lost and clumsily substituted by an angel.

expression, as in the church of SS. Cosmo and Damian at Rome, already described, and pre-eminently at Ravenna, among many works which are extant there.

The most remarkable and complete example of this mode of treatment is the subject of the Transfiguration in the apse of the church of S. Apollinare in Classe (A.D. 567), where in place of the figure of Christ stands the cross alone, richly jewelled, with the head of Christ set as a medallion in the centre of it, and the half figures of Moses and Elias rising from clouds on either side. Above the cross are inlaid in capital letters the word 'IXΘΥΣ, representing here the initial letters of the Greek words for "Jesus Christ the Son of God the Saviour." Beneath the cross, where the figures of the three witnessing disciples are usually grouped, are three sheep looking upward to the cross; and below them stands the patron of the church, S. Apollinare, with his arms extended, and sheep on his right and left, on a foreground of grass and lilies. The scheme of the whole work is completed on the wall above the apse by another medallion head of Christ, supported by the symbolic figures of the evangelists, and sheep on either side proceeding toward Him from Bethlehem and Jerusalem, the two cities "consecrated by their associations with His birth and death."

Totally different from these, but equally and entirely symbolic in their treatment, are the two mosaic pictures representing the Eucharist, one of which is in the choir of San Vitale, where Melchisedech, supported on the right and left by Moses and Isaiah, is seen standing before an altar on which are two loaves and a chalice; and in a similar place in the church of S. Apollinare in Classe the subject is even more complete, where the figure of Melchisedech at the altar is supported on one side by Abel holding in his arms a lamb, as though presenting it before the altar, and on the other

by Abraham leading forward Isaac with the same significance.

These afford a good idea of the religious poetry of the artists of those days. What was done in the time that Theodoric was in possession is not accurately known, beyond that of his having sent to Rome for marble masons, among whom mosaicists were especially included,[1] for his palace and the Arian cathedral and baptistery begun by him; but before his reign two important works, which are still extant, had been completed for the Empress Galla Placidia, one known as her mausoleum, the other as the orthodox baptistery, both richly and beautifully clothed with mosaics. The mausoleum is built upon the plan of a Greek cross, with a central dome in which are represented the starry heavens, and a golden cross at the summit, and enriched all about the arches and spandrels with other figures natural and emblematic. But this chapel is most famous for that symbolic figure of Our Lord—so loved and so often repeated by the early Christians—the Good Shepherd. He is here represented amid a rocky landscape, seated

[1] Letter of King Theodoric to Agapetus, "Præfectus Urbis"—(this letter has been commonly cited as addressed to Pope Agapetus, but there was no pope of that name till 535, nine years after Theodoric's death)—"I am going to build a great Basilica of Hercules at Ravenna, for I wish my age to match preceding ones in the beauty of its buildings as it does in the happiness of the lives of my subjects. Send me, therefore, skilful workers in Mosaic."

Cassiodorus was private secretary, "comes rerum privatarum," and chancellor to Theodoric, who reigned as King of Italy in Ravenna from A.D. 493 to 526. The letter quoted above is one of the king's letters preserved by him, but the opinion about the art of mosaic from a man of his high accomplishments may interest the reader. He writes thus, "Send us from your city some of your most skilful marble workers, who may join together those pieces which have been exquisitely divided, and connecting together their exquisite veins of colour, may admirably represent the natural appearance. From art proceeds this gift which conquers Nature. And thus the discoloured surface of the marble is woven into the *loveliest variety of pictures;* the value of the work now as always being increased by the minute labour which has to be expended on the production of the Beautiful."—(*Letters of Cassiodorus*, Hodgkin, p. 147. London, 1886.)

and with sheep around him, one of which He stoops to caress, and with the other hand He holds a cross. The figure is classic in the gracefulness of its attitude, and beautiful also in the harmony of its colouring. Indeed, whether in design, colour, or expression, it is the most impressive representation of this lovely subject in early Christian art.

The artists at Ravenna were, however, as successful in representing historic and dramatic subjects as the mystic and ideal. Of that kind the two great pictures of Justinian and Theodora, surrounded by their courtly attendants at the consecration of the church of S. Vitale, are well-known examples, valuable for portraiture, costume, and historical incident. But after that time the arts at Ravenna soon came to their close, and as the capital of the Exarchate its glory was short-lived. At headquarters intrigue, crime, and disaster desolated Constantinople; and Ravenna itself shared in the troubles of the age, changing its masters rapidly from the empire to the Lombards, from them to the Franks, and at last to the see of Rome; and little more than two centuries after its finest works had been completed, a shadow fell on it, as on those that are out of sight and out of mind, and its disregarded mosaics were robbed with the sanction of its absent rulers.

The gloom of a dark age had settled upon Europe. The world was at war, and gave no heed to the arts of peace. The East was in confusion, and Rome had been handed over to the care, civil, military, and diplomatic, of those whose office was founded, and whose education had trained them, for other than mundane affairs, and the result was inevitable ruin. But the time of the North had come, and the genius of Charlemagne was consolidating an empire on the Rhine. As politician, soldier, and churchman, he was the equal of the best, and superior to them all in courage, grasp, and will.

He felt and acted on the truth of the adage about art that he may have never heard, "emollit mores"; and into no subject of all that home and foreign difficulties forced upon him, did he act with more energy than for the introduction of civilising arts among his turbulent and even barbarous subjects. Fixing the northern centre of empire at Aquis Grani (Aix la Chapelle), the place of invaluably healing springs, the first appendage to his palace was a cathedral. He knew from his southern experience what art was, and he sent there for his workmen and his artists; but whatever their nationality may have been, their art was Byzantine. He wanted mosaic for his palace and his church; but it was an art that for two hundred years the Romans had found no zest nor heart to cultivate. Time pressed, and materials must be found ready to his hand, so Ravenna was pillaged with licensed robbery.[1] With the written authority of Pope Adrian the First, the tesseræ were stripped from the walls and the marbles from the pavements, and the cathedral at Aix was clothed with their stolen glories. Pictures of sacred subjects were thus executed on its walls, and upon the cupola was displayed the subject of Christ enthroned with the elders casting their crowns before Him, a fine choice of subject as the first tribute of art to religion by the first Christian emperor of the north; but no part of these works remain; and only a bad engraving preserves a tradition of the subject of that cupola.[2]

Little is known of the immediate results of this introduction of the arts into Northern Germany; but scattered notices of its continuance come from Cologne, Lyons,

[1] Letters of Pope Adrian the First are preserved in the Vatican. In one answering the application of Charlemagne, the Pope writes thus:—"Carolo Regi musiva et marmora urbis Ravennæ, tam in Templis quam in Parietibus et stratis sita sicut petierat donat." In another letter similar words conclude, "vobis concedimus auferanda."

[2] Ciampini, *Vetera Mon., in loco.*, and Barbier de Montault, *Die Mosaiken im Münster zu Aachen.*

Hildesheim, and the convent of Centula in Picardy, where the abbot, a friend of Charlemagne, availed himself of the artists introduced by the emperor; and here and there a few relics of the art are preserved, as at Germigny des Prés in Loiret, faint reflections of the light that had gleamed and died away at Aix.

The only really fine work of that century (about 835-40) was one executed in the interesting church of S. Ambrogio at Milan, in which is perpetuated by mosaic the story of the saint having fallen asleep during the performance of mass there, and dreaming of the death of S. Martin of Tours, which occurred at that time. The upper part of the composition exhibits the figure of Christ in glory with flying figures of archangels, and below them saints standing on either side. It was about the same time that the first mosaic was introduced at Venice, in the church of S. Margaret, long since lost.[1]

In the East all record of the arts of this age are hidden beneath the mists of troubled earth and heaven. Mahomedan victories prevailed far and wide, and mosques were rising with costly magnificence; and as mosaic was admirably adapted for their arabesque ornament, it is not surprising to hear that at the conclusion of peace at Constantinople, the Caliph Walid stipulated for a contribution of a quantity of mosaic tesseræ for his mosque at Damascus; and again, two hundred years later, we learn that Romanus II. presented to the Caliph Abderraman glass tesseræ for the

[1] In a general sketch of this very wide subject, the writer trusts his readers will perceive how impossible it would be to refer to any more than representative examples of this art, without disturbing the course of general interest, wearying the reader with descriptions, and producing a result more like a catalogue than a history. He therefore somewhat unwillingly omits reference to many examples belonging to the Christian era in France, Germany, and Italy, and confines description to such as are not intimately known, or possess some speciality that has not been sufficiently noticed.

kibla of his mosque at Cordova. Thus the art dragged on a faint existence beneath the shadows of a dark age. Monastic seclusion afforded its safest retreat, where a few quiet men in the quiet places of the earth kept up its life; and it was thus among the inaccessible shrines of Mount Athos that the best artists found their home and the safest deposit of their art's traditions.

It was about the year 1000 A.D. that the first dawn of reviving art in Europe appeared at the court of the successors of Charlemagne at Aix, and with it the first hopes of civilising influences. Such was the condition of life, even in the highest circles of the court and nobility at that age, as the pages of painful history have but too vividly pictured, that if there was indeed a dawn of a more genial age, it was but a sad one, for its sun had risen in deepest mists that would lift only after long waiting for the day. In the time of the young Emperor Otho the Third, his mother, the widow empress and regent of the empire, who was a Greek, invited from her native land men skilled in various arts, to pick up any traditions that Charlemagne's artists had left, and to introduce some cultivation among her rude people. The cathedral of Hildesheim again possessed an energetic bishop, Bernward by name, the young emperor's tutor, who is credited by his biographer with having added mosaics to the adornment of his church, and as having worked at them with his own hands.[1] He also enumerates the subjects represented, but with insufficient accuracy about their method; but at any rate an inference in favour of their having been executed in true mosaic is fair, from that art being intimately connected with those of glass making and enamelling, about the introduction of which by those very Greeks, and with wide ultimate effect, there is ample evidence.

[1] "Musivum . . . propriâ industriâ, nullo mostrante composuit."—*Taugmar Chronicle.*

It was full half a century later that a similar age of revival dawned in Italy, where the day broke more quickly, for there was more sun to brighten it and more aptitude in the people. It was due to the impressions received in Constantinople by the cardinal abbot of Monte Cassino when there on a diplomatic service between the pope and the emperor, that on returning to his home, the contrast of its cheerless walls with what the buildings of the East had presented to him called into activity the taste that these had aroused. His biographer describes art as dead in Italy: so to the East again the appeal was made; and under the abbot's spirited influence the Greeks, established at Monte Cassino, initiated those schools of many arts to which Italy mainly owes the education of her reviving genius.

It was a few years later that the first mosaics were begun in St. Mark's at Venice, of which some, with happier fate than those at Monte Cassino, still remain as precious reflections of the first gladdening rays of light in that new morning of art and civilisation.

The life thus regained by art was real. For three centuries no mosaic had been executed at Rome; but now the age was startled by its sudden reappearance on the walls of one that was then, and still is, among the grandest of its churches, Sa. Maria in Trastevere (A.D. 1130-43). Its façade and the wall of its apse are covered with elaborate works to which age only adds to that respect and interest which their own time accorded to them. The principal subject on the exterior is that of the wise and foolish virgins, with the group of the Infant Christ and His mother in their midst. The great mosaic of the interior is, in spite of all the peculiarities of its antique style, magnificent. It exhibits a scene of celestial glory, which is commonly described as the coronation of the blessed Virgin. Such might for mani-

fest reasons be expected, but its own account of itself is otherwise. At the base of the composition is the flock of twelve sheep, much as they are seen in other mosaics right and left of the Lamb on the mount, from which flow the four rivers of Paradise. Above is a single range of figures, the evident work of original genius inspired by the traditions of the Greek school, but with power to throw its own free life into its work, and make it all Italian. The scene represented is Christ seated on His throne, which is rich with drapery and jewelry, and with figures of saints standing on either side, St. Peter being the nearest on His left. On the same throne is seated a female figure designed with great grace and beauty, her features and expression being those of youth, with her braided hair falling behind her shoulders, so richly jewelled as to look like a wreath of gems; a nimbus is round her head, and her dress is splendid with embroidery and jewels. There is no crown on her head, nor is she bending to receive one as in all the subjects of her coronation. Our Lord is seated by her side holding an open book, and instead of a posture of respect and honour, as though crowning or enthroning His mother, He is represented in the attitude of familiar affection, embracing her neck and laying His hand upon her opposite shoulder. The subject is plain, but still plainer as described by itself, for the scroll held open by both her hands and the book held by Christ, are inlaid with parts of texts from the Song of Solomon about the Bride and Bridegroom, descriptive of such a scene as the artist has here delineated, "His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace me," and, on the open book, "Come, my chosen one, and I will place thee on my throne," "electa" being used for "dilecta" in the quotation, "Come, my beloved," etc., from which the inscription is paraphrased. This great picture is just

such as an artist, designing in the completest but simple manner compatible with the art of that time, would have composed it if inspired by the words in the book of the Revelation of St. John, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife had made herself ready," and "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. xxi. 19). This subject was well known to art at and before that time, as illustrated in MS. illuminations, where Christ is seated, as in this mosaic, on His throne with a female figure crowned and by his side, and the meaning of the group made clear by the inscribed words, "Jesus et Ecclesia," and in another case, "Jesus Christus et Ecclesia sua."

Whatever interpretation may be given to this great mosaic, it most certainly is not that of the "Coronation of the Virgin." That subject, represented by the blessed Virgin being crowned by the hand of Christ as the Queen of Heaven, had not yet been known in art. In this case there is no crown; but a crowned figure thus seated would not necessarily be that of His mother, for as such it was already known and written as "Ecclesia." The peculiar alteration of the word "dilecta," "beloved" (which might apply to both), into the word "electa" suggests a special purpose, and designates the figure in this mosaic as the representative of His "elect," that is to say, His Church, His Bride. She is represented in that bridal song of Holy Writ, the Song of Solomon, as we see her here, beautiful; and in the triumphant language of the 45th Psalm, the same figure appears in the glorification of God's elect, poetically personified as "the King's daughter," and as "a Queen in a vesture of gold wrought about with divers colours," and described as being "brought to the King, . . . with joy and gladness . . . and shall enter into the King's palace." "Thy throne, O God, endureth for ever." This grand subject of the triumph or glorification of

the Church appears to have been the original idea and composition, from which the splendid illustrations of the Coronation of the Virgin, in every form of art, were ultimately developed, as the subject itself developed in the twelfth and subsequent centuries.[1]

The introduction of the figure of Ecclesia was well illustrated in a mosaic of the same period, viz. about A.D. 1210, with which Pope Innocent III. adorned the tribune of the basilica of St. Peter at Rome, and of which Ciampini has given an engraving from a painted copy taken at the time of the demolition of the ancient Church. The subject of it was extensive and gave evidence of the influence of Greek artists still at Rome, the Saviour being represented in the Greek attitude of benediction; but the only purpose for which this mosaic is referred to here is from its comprising a figure of Ecclesia which is found in the remarkable group of the Pope and "the Church" (as a female crowned figure) standing on the right and left of the symbolic Lamb, in the midst of the company of disciples, who are here as elsewhere symbolised by sheep approaching this group from each side. The grand female figures representing the Christian and Jewish Churches in a mosaic of the fifth century in the church of Santa Sabina at Rome are well known as among the finest specimens of art that remain of that date (A.D. 424), recalling the style of the antique in proportion and design. These representatives of the two churches are distinguished by inscriptions, and, before the greater part of the composition to which they

[1] The misstatements and misrepresentations of this mosaic as that of the Coronation of the Virgin have been corrected by the inexorable truth of photography. In the engravings of it the female figure is crowned magnificently. Among others, in Mrs. Jameson's *Legend of the Madonna* at page 16, where the figure is called "l'incoronata," she is so crowned, evidently copied from an Italian engraving; and among Mr. Parker's photographs of Roman mosaics in the art library at S. Kensington is another engraving or etching where the figure is similarly misrepresented.

belong was destroyed in the seventeenth century, their attendant apostles stood above them, that of the Christian Church "Ecclesia ex gentibus" being thus accompanied by St. Paul, and the "Ecclesia ex circumcisione" by St. Peter.[1]

The personification of the Church as the bride of Christ, sometimes crowned, sometimes enthroned, alone or contrasted with the figure of the Jewish Church, and often in connection with the subject of the crucifixion, is common throughout early and mediæval art; but as the illustrative examples of it that I would venture to give are not in mosaic, I defer them to another place.[2]

As mosaic pictures of historical subjects, distinct from scriptural or legendary, are at this period very rare, those which in St. Mark's at Venice occupy a large space in the south transept are all the more valuable, and interesting also from the story which they illustrate. The subject of them is the consecration of the present Church in 1085. These two pictures are curiosities of design, without pretence of detail or proportion, giving a complete idea of the interior, by the simple scheme of an architectural section showing one side of the choir and nave in their earliest condition, and the insides of the half-domes of the five cupolas with their crosses and the sky above them. But the special interest in these pictures is the account which they preserve of an event of the utmost importance to the subsequent fortunes of this Church, viz. the discovery (the "invention") of the relics of St. Mark. The first in order of the two represents the ceremony of the consecration. The bishop is officiating at the altar beneath a canopy of twisted shafts with golden capitals supporting a vault of blue mosaic framed in

[1] These are shown in Ciampini's engraving in his *Vetera Monumenta, in loco.*

[2] Essay on "The Adornment of Sacred Buildings," Part II.

gilt metal work. He is richly vested in a purple cope, clasped on his breast with a morse of inlaid jewels; behind him, within a choir distinguished by a low white screen wall, a number of bishops in various coloured copes and of inferior clergy in white, prostrate themselves to the ground; and beyond them stands the dignified figure of Doge Vital Falier in rapt attention and reverential attitude, followed by members of his council, like himself bowing before the altar. He wears a tall brown cap with jewelled bands, and a rich dress of green with gold borders, and a cloak of gold tissue, as his figure in the next picture shows it, lined with fur. The nave of the church is crowded with laity, the men grouped first, the women toward the west. But all this was but the preparation for the great event of the day, which cannot be better described than by Corner, as quoted in *The Stones of Venice*.[1] But to appreciate this it must be remembered that the original church in which the relics of St. Mark were enshrined was burnt down in 976 and rebuilt and reconsecrated in 1085, an interval of above a century, when such confusion existed as can alone account for the relics of St. Mark being lost, in fact destroyed by the fire, because it needed a miracle to restore them. Flaminio Corner[2] thus describes the scene—

"After the repairs undertaken by the Doge Orseolo, the place in which the body of the holy evangelist rested had been *altogether forgotten;* so that the Doge Vital Falier was entirely ignorant of the place of the venerable deposit. This was no light affliction, not only to the pious Doge but to all the citizens and people, so that at last, moved by confidence in the divine mercy, they determined to implore, with prayer and fasting, the manifestation of so great a treasure,

[1] Vol. ii. page 60.

[2] F. Corner, *Notizie Storiche delle Chiese di Venezia.* 1758.

which did not now depend upon any human effort. A general fast being therefrom proclaimed and a solemn procession being appointed for the 25th of June, while the people assembled in the church interceded with God in fervent prayers for the desired boon, they beheld, with as much amazement as joy, a slight shaking in the marbles of a pillar, near the place where the altar of the cross is now, which, presently falling to the earth, exposed to the view of the rejoicing people the chest of bronze in which the body of the evangelist was laid."

The second picture, to the right, represents what those words describe. The doors of the nave are thrown open, and a procession headed by the bishop in the attitude of prayer approaches the wonder of the day. A white marble pier has broken asunder in the midst, and has exposed a recess in which the relics lie. The Doge, with hands raised as in prayer, and a group of his council follow, and behind them come the citizens, men first then women and children, in attitudes expressive of astonishment and reverence. Such is the foundation of the faith in the present relics of St. Mark. The pictures are valuable also for their illustration of the costume and manners of the day, and of the character of the marble and gold mosaic of the architecture.

The art thus revived soon broke out into a chorus of fine works from east to west. In the east the interior of Constantine's basilica of the Nativity at Bethlehem was clothed with sacred subjects for the Emperor Manuel Comnenus in the middle of the twelfth century, by the mosaicist, Ephrem, those of the choir relating to Christ's infancy, those in the nave to the general history of His career. In the west, in Sicily, under Norman rule, some of the finest works of the age were produced, even to profusion, at Cefalu, at Palermo, and in the basilica at Monreale which crowns

the valley golden with orange gardens above that city. These mosaics are such in quantity and quality as no description could adequately portray. They owe their extent and richness to the devotion of two Norman sovereigns, Roger the Second during the first half of the twelfth century, and William the Good immediately after him. Those at Cefalu are much ruined, but were the most refined of them all, executed by direction of King Roger in 1148. Those of the Capella Palatina are second only to these, and illustrate well the art as attained by the united Greek and native artists, of which the numerous Greek and Latin inscriptions all over the building give evidence.

The subjects with which the nave, transepts, and choir of the great basilica of Monreale are covered, exhaust the principal incidents of sacred history. At the extreme east a colossal bust of Christ, with the typical group of the Virgin and Child beneath it, are the culminating objects of its long vista; and these with ranks of single figures covering the sanctuary and choir, all on gold and otherwise richly ornamented grounds throughout, produce at once a dignity and splendour of effect unsurpassed by any building of its date. It has the great advantage of contemporaneous works throughout its architecture and decoration, securing to it the repose of unity which all the splendour of its material and variety of ornament does not disturb. The great size of the building has also its share in the grandeur of effect; and the whole is well brought together and harmonised by the sober richness of its inlaid marble floor. It lacks only one great feature in which its neighbour the Capella Palatina at Palermo and the unrivalled St. Mark's at Venice surpass it, namely, a vaulted and mosaicked roof, for here it is only of open timber illuminated with colours. Irrespective of the artistic activity this great work dis-

plays, the amount of industry alone which it represents is wonderful; for mosaic compared with other modes of painting is like the stippling of a miniature. Its chronicler states that it was the work of 150 mosaicists during three years. Among the accessories which contribute to the completeness of the effect is the royal throne in the choir, an imposing and sumptuous work of mosaic, of the kind subsequently perfected by the school of the Cosmati; and above it on the south wall a mosaic picture of Christ crowning "Rex Guilielmus," the Norman "King William the Good," to whom this great building owes its completion. Its style throughout well represents the characteristics of its day, viz. the transition from the trammels of Byzantine prescription to freedom and originality.

But such freedom is not found everywhere at that time; there were few if any but Greeks and their Italian pupils who practised this art, and although they had been the safe keepers of the art's traditions, their artists had fallen very low in its work. Venice was then their principal resort in Italy, and even later, for it was to Venice that the painter Tafi was sent in 1225 to obtain instruction and assistance for the work the Florentines had commissioned him to execute in mosaic in their baptistery. About half a century before that time a great mosaic covered the western wall of the cathedral of Torcello, the great cathedral of ancient Venice, begun in the seventh century and completed in 1008, and now left desolate in that island of poetic loneliness, with its baptistery and that little gem of architecture, the church of Sa. Fosca, as the sole occupants of that once crowded spot, where now the sighing of the wind about its reedy banks alone breaks the silence of the lagoon.

The subjects of the Torcello mosaic are divided in several compartments across the western wall. Of

these the two highest contain the scenes of the crucifixion and the descent to Hades, the three lower ones representing on one side Paradise, and on the other, with more than Dantesque horror, the terrible scenes of hell. The execution of divine punishment is here depicted by a stream of fire meandering among the figures below the throne till it breaks out into flames among the condemned in hell. The horrors of the representation are such as rather to mar than to enhance the enjoyment which the opposite scenes of Paradise are intended to convey. The land of the blessed appears as a garden, with the tree of life at its entrance and an angel guarding the gate. Abraham sits in the midst of it, and outside St. John the Baptist and St. Peter offer entrance to the saved, and St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin welcome them, their figures being invested with all the beauty the old artist could express.

The mosaics of Murano, where the single figure of the blessed Virgin with the Child in her arms stands alone, beautiful and majestic, in the apse above the altar of its old cathedral and those of Venice, are as well known as those of Torcello are too commonly neglected and ignored. Together they illustrate the whole history of contemporary art. It had shown itself in its utter decadence at St. Mark's, but it was now awaking to a higher ideal, as that wondrous Duomo exhibits it in every phase. The mosaics of the western and central domes and the porch best illustrate the art of this date, from the last years of the eleventh to the end of the twelfth century. The subject of the western cupola, which surmounts the nave, is Pentecost, and is most effectively expressed by the rays of the symbolic dove descending on the heads of the twelve apostles, while below them, round the cupola, are groups of persons representing separately, and with their names above

them, the many nations speaking those many tongues with which the chosen twelve had been endowed. The pendentives below are appropriately filled with colossal figures of the four archangels. The cupola next beyond it, over the cross of the transepts, has the glorious subject of the general benediction of Christ at his ascension, with attendant figures grouped all round beneath, with the olive-tree of the Mount of Olives between each of them; and on the pendentives supporting the dome the four evangelists are seated with the symbolic figures of the four rivers of Paradise pouring out the streams of the Gospel to the four quarters of the world.

The works of this period in the porch are exceedingly numerous, including in their subjects the whole history of the book of Genesis, and of the wandering of the Israelites in the desert, mostly of great originality in design, but rather to be seen than to be described.

In the early years of this renaissance a fashion had widely prevailed north and south of the Alps of lavishing work and material upon great pavements. South of the Alps those at St. Mark's and Murano and Palermo are the earliest. North of the Alps they are also always called mosaics; and no doubt in greater part they were so, with large slabs of coloured marble helping to cover space impossible for tesseræ; but many of them and other such works of that age have perished; for there was an iconoclasm in the north-west in the middle of the twelfth century, excited by the spiritual enthusiasm of St. Bernard of Clairvault, to whose denunciations, mistaking with reckless impartiality the elements of education in a rude age for elements of idolatry, the loss of many precious works are traced. One at least of them which has been entirely ruined was too grand a work to be passed without record, namely, that of the great choir of St. Remi, at Rheims. It was covered with a marble marquetry of

real and symbolical subjects of great variety and refinement, described by its chronicler as "representing an infinity of figures as though drawn with the brush."[1] At the entrance of the choir lay a great figure of King David playing his harp; and beyond it numerous groups arranged in large circles and squares, the nearest of which had for its principal figure St. Jerome, with prophets, evangelists, and saints around him, each distinguished by his name inlaid. The next compartment contained figures pouring out water from their urns, the original mode of symbolising the four rivers of Paradise, and the dispersal of the four gospels over the world; and in the centre a woman riding on a dolphin represented the earth and sea, the words "Terra" and "Mare" being inscribed beside them. The next great square was filled with scrolling foliage, and beyond it another with impersonations of the four seasons; and by way of a pendent to the Terra and Mare was introduced the figure of a man seated by a river, described as "Orbis terræ," occupying the centre. The adjacent compartment appears to have been a fine composition, of which the figures representing the seven liberal arts were the principal, and beyond them was an oblong division enclosing large circles, in one case having Moses seated in the centre with an angel standing on his knee, and around him figures representing the twelve months, the virtues, and the four points of the compass, balanced in the other circle by the animals representative of the constellations of the Great and Little Bear surrounded by the twelve signs of the zodiac. For the sanctuary and steps of the altar were reserved the symbolic subjects of the sacrifice of Isaac, Jacob's ladder, and others, the remaining parts of the floor being inlaid with jasper and other precious marbles,

[1] Berger, *Histoire des grands Chemins*, gives a long detailed account of it, vide *Annales Archæ.*, vol. x. p. 6. 1850.

"set as jewels are set in rings." In front of the abbot's chair was the figure of Wisdom, "Sapientia," thrusting a pointed staff at Idleness, and Ignorance crouched at her feet. Such was this great pavement at Rheims, a wonder of its kind and of its age, executed in the last years of the eleventh century, and an irreparable loss for our own. To the same age, if not a little earlier, belongs the pavement in the cathedral of Novara, which was set in black and white, not so effective artistically, but richer in the more exclusively religious subjects and symbolism, including those of the Lamb among the seven candlesticks, the pelican feeding its young, the phœnix rising from the fire, the vine and the peacock, the dove drinking from the chalice, and much else,—an interesting record of the feeling and art of its day, and, with better fortune than that at Rheims, preserved to our time.

The large pavements of mosaic character in the early middle ages, north of the Alps, were, however, of such a style as is not to be entirely classed with mosaics. So many have been destroyed that it is hard to make sure from contemporary accounts exactly what they were; but by reasonable inferences they were less of true mosaic, if indeed at all so in some cases, than of inlaid pieces on the principle of what is known as Florentine mosaic. Of this style, but in fictile work, there is an interesting English example of the fourteenth century on the floor of Prior Crawden's chapel among the old buildings of St. Etheldreda's convent at Ely. It occupies the altar pace. The subject of it is the Fall, and the colours of its enamelled pieces remain in parts sufficient to indicate its original condition. Adam and Eve, the serpent and the tree, form the old composition, the flatly-coloured forms being aided by incised black lines. On each side the spaces are covered, in the same kind of fictile inlay, with figures of lions and geometrical patterns very variously coloured.

But the attempt to include such work with mosaic would lead to the interminable subject of "sectile" and "tarsia," from the enamelled walls of the great mosque at Ispahan, and of Omar at Jerusalem, to the inlaid precious stones and marbles on the monuments of the Taj Mahal, and of Itmud-ud-Doulah at Agra, and to such floors as that of Siena Cathedral, where in "sectile mosaic" of coloured marbles, great scriptural and emblematic compositions cover the entire space of nave, transepts, and choir,—but indeed the subject would not stop there, for such sectile work is as fine in other material as marbles, and would range from the fine old Roman work of "The Rape of Hylas"[1] inlaid in precious stones, to the exquisite devices designed by young Raphael, and executed in coloured woods in the churches of Perugia. I venture therefore to omit all such and to return to the works of the truer, *i.e.* tessellated, mosaic.

Among the favourite subjects of designs for pavements were the labyrinth, the zodiac, and the calendar, this last being usually treated much in the same way as in MS. illuminations, with a ring of circles filled with emblematic figures of the months engaged upon their seasonable labours. At Aosta is a unique example of this subject in which, with the twelve months arranged in order all round, in the central circle is seated on a throne a grand female figure of "the year," plainly designated Annus, with a nimbus round her head, and the sun and moon to the right and left, a richly-coloured work of tessellated mosaic of the close of the eleventh century.[2]

[1] Two fine examples of sectile mosaic were found in the hall or basilica of Junius Bassus (consul, A.D. 317), one the Rape of Hylas, the other a group of a consul or other Roman official in a chariot with mounted attendants, etc. *Vide* Ciampini, *Vet. Mon. Mosaic, in loco*, and an elaborate article on them and sectile mosaic generally, by Mr. Alex. Nesbitt, *Archæologia*, vol. 45.

[2] *Annales Archæologiques*, t. xvii. for 1837, in which coloured engravings of this and another mosaic in the same place are given.

The labyrinth is archæologically too large a subject to be treated here, but in relation to mosaic it forms quite an important feature, and ranges in every variety of character from the inlaid floor, where for penitential purposes its intricacies were threaded sometimes on the feet, sometimes on the knees, and sometimes with the fingers, as in the labyrinth engraved upon one of the piers of the porch of the cathedral at Lucca, to others where it was merely used as an ornamental device and often richly coloured in marble, enamelled tiles and mosaic in classic and Christian art, varying in style from those on the old Roman floors of Bignor in England, and at Caerleon in Wales, to the mediæval pavement inlaid in black and white under the western tower of Ely Cathedral.

The associations of ancient and mediæval art were singularly brought together by these labyrinths, as those of the Roman mosaic at Salzburg and the Christian example at Chartres are sufficient to illustrate, where in each case the centres were originally occupied by the classic fable of Theseus slaying the Minotaur in the famous labyrinth in Crete, which certainly in Christian art, and very probably in Pagan, symbolised the heroism of self-devotion overcoming evil. The passages of the Christian labyrinth were sometimes engraved with the verses of the Miserere for repetition by the penitents as they followed the track, and for all others their moral was to "represent the difficult ways of life, before arriving at celestial rest." In the ancient basilica at Orleansville in Algeria, founded as early as A.D. 328, the Church, "Sancta Ecclesia," is written in mosaic in the centre of the labyrinth, as the haven of the soul's rest, with pathways sometimes approaching, sometimes diverging from it, as in the waywardness of life. Every century till the close of the fourteenth, affords examples of pavements orna-

mented with labyrinths. On the floor of the grand Lombard church of San Michele at Pavia is a fine one dating from the sixth century, on which also the figures of Theseus and the Minotaur originally filled the centre. The labyrinths, thus designed for devotional purposes, were, when space allowed them, of very large dimensions; for instance, the early thirteenth century example at Rheims measured 35 feet in diameter, octagon in form, with projecting bastions, and was used penitentially in place of pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and hence called "the road to Jerusalem." Another of the same century, but still larger, at Amiens, measured 42 feet in diameter, having for its central device an inlaid brass cross as the object of attainment. The great circular labyrinth which occupied the centre of the floor in the nave of Chartres Cathedral was of such extent as to require an hour to trace its passages, and hence called "La Lieue." Its paths were inlaid white, with the Miserere engraved all along them, the divisions and barriers being blue, and in the central medallion the figures of Theseus and the Minotaur, explicable in such a situation only by the attribution of the deepest Christian symbolism. Among the latest labyrinths is that one which forms the centre of the pavement in encaustic tiles of the chapter-house at Bayeux in Normandy, where the enamelled colouring has been worn off by the persistent devotion of the Chanoines. There is much interest in this subject from the curious variety of devices, which, however, do not affect mosaic, such as the labyrinth worked in embroidery on one of the imperial robes of state at Rome in the ninth century,[1] several engraved upon walls, as those of Poictiers Cathedral and Lucca, and one encrusted in lead at the west end of the cathedral

[1] *Graphia aureæ urbis Romæ*, pp. 92 and 178. A. F. Ozanan. Also *Archæological Journal*, 1858. E. Trollope.

at Sens, and the still more curious labyrinths cut in turf in numerous places in England and Wales, for the games of swains and lasses of old times. After the fifteenth century, whether for religious use or ornament, the device appears to have been discontinued, till restored in modern times among the pleasant conceits of ornamental gardening; among which, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, fancy called them Troy-town or Julian's Bower.

But enough of pavements. In Italy the art of mosaic was now, during the twelfth century, rapidly developed upon walls and vaulting, principally by artists from Siena and Florence, whence the names of the Greek Apollonius and the Italian Cimabue and Mino da Turrita, Duccio and Tafi, Gaddi and Giotto, awaken associations of such interest in history, art, and religion as, once known, haunt the memory for life.

Their works must be seen to be understood. They abound with much zeal and poetry, and at once engage our sympathy and admiration by the earnestness of feeling and the grand artistic genius they display. Words can do but little more than chronicle their subjects, for to embody their poetry by any other mode of expression than their own, or to convey that devotional sense to which they owe their inspiration is impossible. Both modes of composition, the symbolic and the dramatic, were revived together. The contemplative Sienese, the practical Florentine, the ideal Greek, infused their works with this variety of their conceptions. The symbolism which had characterised the mosaics of Ravenna was now consummated at Rome over the altars of San Clemente and the apsidal recesses of the Lateran and Santa Maria Maggiore, affording examples of a reviving art that for magnificence of effect and expressive grandeur, under the

obligations of architectural constraint, have not been surpassed.

The ornamentation of the apse of San Clemente is essentially symbolic. The four arms of the cross, which form its central motive, are inlaid with white doves, and in the centre is the figure of the Crucified of such exceedingly small size as all but to escape observation, as though to avoid to the utmost all dramatic representation. Enclosed, within a branch of thorn bent in the form of a vesica, small figures of the Virgin and St. John stand close against the lower arm of the cross, and from its base, considerably below them, spring vine tendrils which cover the entire vault with their graceful curves. Numerous emblematic and other figures fill the vacant spaces, and among them are seen the four fathers of the Western Church seated writing. The stream of the water of life breaks out as a river from the foot of the cross, and on each side deer stand and drink from it. A broad band, like a frieze at the springing of the vault, is occupied by twelve sheep with the symbolic Lamb in the centre of them, and on the wall beyond it, at each end of it, are represented the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The complete text of the "Gloria in excelsis" surrounds the arch, and on the wall above it is the bust of the Saviour in the act of benediction, with figures, on each side, of St. Paul, St. Laurence, and Isaiah on the dexter, and opposite them St. Peter, St. Clement, and Jeremiah. With regard to the inscriptions, it is remarkable that the two essentially Roman martyrs are distinguished by the Greek appellations of "agios Paulos" and "agios Petros," the rest in Latin.

The great mosaic in a similar position in the Lateran is a stately composition admirably combining its purpose as a dignified architectural ornament with the calm expression of devotional religion. It is

entirely free from dramatic effect. Its central subject is as conventional as that of San Clemente, and even more intently symbolic. Its central figure is a huge cross, the consummating symbol of the Christian faith, built up of ornamental forms like one vast jewel, with no figure on it, but a small medallion in its centre containing the subject of the baptism of Christ. From above, the Holy Spirit as a dove sheds down rays like streams of water falling on each side of the cross upon the symbolic Calvary, and at its base a small building represents the gates of Paradise with an angel guarding it, and the tree of life above it with the Phœnix, the symbol of immortality, seated on its branches. The four rivers with their names written, Pison, Euphrates, Tigris, Gion, flow forth, with groups of sheep and deer drinking from them. The broad stream "Jordanes" flows below, about which winged children are sailing and playing with swans and other birds. On each side of the cross, on a border of grass strewn with flowers, stand calm figures of the Virgin and St. John the Baptist in the place of honour, and beyond them on each side three, St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Francis, and St. John Evangelist, St. Anthony, and St. Andrew, all with raised hands turned toward the cross. Above all this is a separate compartment of blue sky chequered with many-coloured clouds ; and immediately above the cross is a bust of Christ arched over by a choir of seraphs.

This grand composition is supported by a deep band of mosaic filling up the spaces between the windows below, and containing many saintly figures standing with palm-trees between them. Severe criticism would find fault with anything, but certainly here, fine as the work is, it is liable to remark on the displeasing adoption of various scales for the figures, as though representing their spiritual dignity by their physical size, by making the saints Francis and

Anthony diminutive in comparison with the grander figures around them, and worse still with that of Pope Nicolas IV., who crouches at the feet of the Virgin. But the bust of Christ above, frequently thus introduced, and in this case with a really fine head, certainly mars the quietude of the general proportions by its colossal size, and by its obtrusive reality it spoils the quiet completeness of the symbolism, to which the whole centre of the composition is otherwise devoted. It peeps out from behind nothing, as though it had no place there, and the personages below are adoring not Him but the cross. But this head has a miraculous story, having been always regarded by the people as representing the head of Christ Himself, which in that place appeared to Constantine on the occasion of the consecration of his church in 323-24. The legend goes on to state that it had escaped seven fires unhurt, and its removal and replacement without injury; but the extant order of Nicolas IV. in 1290 that it should be placed there seems to resolve the mystery, as by the style of the head might be expected, that it is, at least mainly, the work of the two artists whose signatures exist below. This mosaic has a further interest in its preserving the names of its artists, the one who signs the base of the mosaic of the semi-cupola being Jacobus Toriti[1] pict.; and among the figures between the windows below are represented two Franciscan monks kneeling, one without any inscription, who may therefore represent Toriti, whose name is on the mosaic above him, carrying in his hand the compass and the square; the other, a younger monk, with the inscription "Fr.

[1] There has been some confusion about this artist owing to similarity of names. Vasari is very hazy on the subject. This Jacobus, who signed his family name Toriti and *Torriti*, was a Roman. The Jacobus with whom he has been confounded was a Florentine, his predecessor, who had been engaged on the baptistery at Florence above half a century before. A historian of his order had styled him from the place of his birth "*Da Turrita*," hence the mistake.

Jacob. de Camerino," carrying in one hand a trowel and in the other the long pointed hammer peculiar to his art.

Of the three other great apsidal mosaics of the thirteenth century at Rome, viz. those of St. Peter's, St. Paul's outside the walls, and Sa. Maria Maggiore, only the last remains. St. Paul's was destroyed by fire, St. Peter's by vandalism. That of Sa. Maria Maggiore, but little affected by injury and repair, is a grand monument of Italy's first great renaissance of art and genius. It is the work of the same artist, who either composed or so far reconstituted the great work in the apse of the Lateran as to have practically made it his own, and has signed it here as there "Jacobus Torriti pictor," adding on the opposite corner the date of this work 1295. The design is as simple as it is grand in its architectonic conception. In a great central medallion, occupying a third of the semi-dome, is represented, of colossal dimensions, Christ in the act of crowning His mother. They sit upon a spacious and richly-ornamented throne, relieved upon a background of the blue heavens gemmed with stars; a crowd of angels are below them on each side, and beyond them figures of saints standing in attitudes of adoration. The rest of the vault is filled, upon a gold ground, with scrolls of foliage and birds seated on the branches. Below it the waters of the Jordan symbolise the separation of this troublous world from the celestial scene above. If the drawing of the figures may be charged with fault it is but that common to its age, and if the colour may be criticised as strong, it is but what the wealth of coloured marbles, metals, and golden ornament of the sanctuary and altar beneath had prepared for it. Torriti's art was that of an architectural mosaicist, and he was master of it.

This grand basilica had derived its original name of Sa. Maria ad Nives from the strange circumstances alleged to have attended the selection of the site.

Nothing is too marvellous for a legend. It tells that in the year 352 the blessed Virgin appeared simultaneously in dreams to the Bishop of Rome, Liberius, and to a certain good patrician John, who desired to build a church in her honour, and indicated to them both that its place would be marked by a fall of snow. The truth of these dreams was realised by the bishop, the patrician, and their attendants finding at the highest point of the Esquiline Hill a patch of snow in the form of the ground-plan of a basilica; so the church was built, and called after that strange revelation "ad Nives." This legend affords the subjects of a series of mosaics which covered the façade in the first years of the fourteenth century, by an artist who has signed his name above them, "Philipp. Rusuti fecit hoc opus." A majesty of the old typical character occupies the centre, with the Virgin standing on one side and St. John Baptist on the other, with St. Peter, St. Paul, and other apostles; and below them various picturesque illustrations of the bishop and the good John asleep, with the Virgin appearing to them, and other subsequent incidents of the fall of snow and the foundation of the church; but with indifference to such works, characteristic of the last century, a new façade of heavy arches and balconies was erected in 1741 in front of these mosaics, destroying some and obscuring the rest. Enough, however, remains[1] to show by these works the interesting advance this art had made.

The genius of the West had now asserted itself, and worked clear of that Greek tutelage which it had too long allowed. The Greek school was effete. It had faithfully preserved the traditions of its technicality, but its art was dead. Mosaic was one of the passions of Italian art in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries;

[1] An excellent chromo-lithograph of them is given by De Rossi, *Mosaici delle Chiese di Roma.*

and now fine works were multiplied to such a degree as to defy description. Gaddo Gaddi, the father of a family of artists, was a mosaicist, a friend of Cimabue and Tafi, and a fellow-workman with Torriti and Rusuti. His works in St. Peter's and elsewhere were numerous and important, such as those which covered the vaulted ceiling of the cathedral at Arezzo, but time and accident have dealt hardly with them, leaving scarcely any but the figures of the apostles in the baptistery and the Coronation of the Virgin in the cathedral of Florence.

At that time a remarkable family of artists, the Cosmati, distinguished themselves at Rome. They were adepts at sculpture, architecture, and in a less degree in painting also: but most famous for the refinement in their works of mosaic, which was rather decorative than architectural, and devoted rather to the ornamentation of monuments and the accessories of buildings than to great works of pictorial design. Among their pupils was Pietro Cavallini, who, by a maze of hypothesis, has been associated with the mosaics of the shrine of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, where the work is certainly of the Cosmati character of this age, but with which Cavallini could have had nothing to do.[1] He was an accomplished artist, the pride of that refined school of mosaicists and the pupil of Giotto in painting; but like Gaddi, he too

[1] The shrine was completed in 1270. The dates of Cavallini's birth vary in his biographies by Lanzi and Vasari; according to the former he was born in 1259, and would have been eleven years old at the completion of that monument. According to Vasari he was born in 1279, nine years after that completion. The inscription on the shrine is "Petrus duxit in actum Romanus civis." George Vertue, whose *Anecdotes of Painting* were published by Horace Walpole, appears to have caught at the name Pietro, and knowing of Cavallini as a mosaicist pupil of the Roman Cosmati of that age and style, decided, regardless of dates, that the Petrus Romanus civis could be no other than that distinguished artist. *Vide* for this, and the equally futile idea of Cavallini having designed Queen Eleanor's (Gothic) crosses, Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting*, vol. i. pp. 30-35.

has been unfortunate, for his great works, which covered the walls of the nave and the façade of St. Paul's at Rome, perished in the fire which destroyed that basilica in 1823; but in Sa. Maria in Trastevere his fine mosaic pictures illustrating the life of the blessed Virgin still adorn the walls of the apse.

The supplementary effect of colouring by mosaics on the exteriors of important buildings of this age was finely exhibited on the façade of the cathedral at Orvieto, where a Sienese artist, Andrea, worked for some years; and on that of Siena from Michele Memmo in the fourteenth to David Ghirlandajo in the latter part of the fifteenth century. At Rome the façade of St. Peter's was richly ornamented in this manner with the great Apocalyptic scene of the company of heaven before the throne of Christ, the principal personages of the New Testament being grouped around Him, and the elders casting their crowns at His feet. The great mosaics on the fronts of St. Paul's and Sa. Maria Maggiore have been already mentioned, and those which still decorate the front of Sa. Maria in Trastevere. The Navicella by Giotto was one of the most famous of this class. The original of it was over the main entrance in the portico of St. Peter's; but having been removed three times, twice to outside walls and once inside, it was entirely wrecked, and the present copy of it, partly traditional partly from an old cartoon, represents the old composition, but is of entirely modern work. The subject of it is St. Peter walking on the waves, a scene composed with great animation and telling the story effectively; but whether Giotto ever worked upon the mosaic is not known; his part would rather have been in the design than in the time-consuming speciality of setting the tesseræ, which in this case, according to Vasari, was mainly the work of his pupil, Pietro Cavallini. The question may probably be

asked and answered in the same way about Cimabue, who, in the first years of the fourteenth century, was associated with the mosaicists at work in the cathedral of Pisa, where Tura and subsequently Vicino were the principal artists ; but no actual mosaic work is attributed to Cimabue's own hand.

After the twelfth century mosaic appears rarely north of the Alps. The architects and artists spent all their enthusiasm and their means in developing their new ideal of pointed architecture, and what mosaic they used was their own version of it, in the sectile glass of their windows and pavements of enamelled tiles. South of the Alps, although the development of wall painting in tempera and fresco had won the public taste and had dethroned the supremacy of mosaic, this latter art was still cultivated, and many names of the leading painters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are associated with it, such as Lippi, Baldovinetti, Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, sometimes for the repair of old works and sometimes on originals. Their work was what would be expected from such men—most refined; but the architectural sense that gave the older mosaics their great character in monumental art had lost its power and had no place in them. A contrary ideal had crossed its path, the ideal of individuality. The frescoes and wall paintings of that age were works of individual excellence, conceived in relation to themselves alone, and beautiful in themselves, but without relation to the walls they covered. The painter did not think of them; but mosaic had been an art devised *for* them, and had become part of them in fact as much as in idea, uniting the arts of painter and architect, and participating in the grandeur of their broad harmony. Baldovinetti, the Florentine painter, was the most earnest to maintain the honour of the art ; and Peselli, whose name is well known among the interesting annals of the early

Florentine school of painting, ornamented with mosaic, in 1416, Orcagna's lovely shrine in the church of Or' San Michele. Even Raphael was pressed into the service, but the works executed from his designs in Sa. Maria del Popolo at Rome are not worthy of him. They represent illusive openings in the roof, through which the figures of the Almighty and of the cycle of the planets are seen from below.[1] The architectonic ideal was no more.

The real centre of activity in the art was now St. Mark's at Venice, where the old traditions were maintained to the utmost in their conflict with the independent school of painting, then rapidly advancing upon them. In 1430 Michele Giamboni adorned the walls of the chapel of the Mascoli in St. Mark's with illustrations of the life of the blessed Virgin, designed and wrought by him; a work of considerable extent, and inspired with a charming simplicity and earnestness. But by the middle of the following century that phase of monumental art was over; and Titian, Tintoretto, Pordenone, and their followers, drew cartoons and painted pictures, and skilled mosaicists copied them upon walls and vaulting without regard for what surrounded them, or the faintest attention to congruity of style or effect; and thus the shadows gathered round this grand old art, as its day drew rapidly to its close. Another art and another ideal had risen to their zenith, and the last honours of monumental mosaic were lost amid the glare and flourish of an indifferent age.

[1] They were designed by Raphael for the Chigi Chapel in that church, and executed by a Venetian, Luca or Luigi della Pace, who dates his work 1516. Raphael and the banker Agost. Chigi died in the same month of 1520, and the chapel was unfinished at that date (*C. and C.*, vol. ii., pp. 252 and 337). The whole subject is fully discussed in the *Life of Raphael*, by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. ii., pp. 337-40 and notes; and in the *Critical Account of Drawings by Michael Angelo and Raphael*, by Mr. T. C. Robinson. Oxford, 1870, pp. 265-69.

ESSAY VII

THE ART AND THE ARTISTS OF GLASS PAINTING

ANCIENT AND MEDIÆVAL

WHEN Pliny wrote these words of commendation about the use of glass for artistic purposes—"nec est alia nunc materia sequatior, aut etiam picturæ accommodatior" ("nothing adapts itself more pleasantly to the art of the painter than glass"), it was in very general use, and the choice specimens of it were highly prized among those graceful works that adorned the luxury of life. He saw it artistically in many forms brought to perfection, but the most effective of them all was unknown to him; and it was not till among the darkest days of a succeeding age that the art of glass painting for translucent pictorial effect came into use. That it was actually invented in those ill-recorded days of the middle ages cannot be affirmed; for like all other arts it had come of the growth of opportunities; and until the amount and price of the material made it available, the ancient use of it sufficed only to suggest that which not till centuries later became possible, viz. the employment of opaque enamel to define ornamental design upon the colours of glass used transparently. Its development, as we now know it, was due to the requirements and tastes of conventual life in the middle ages.

If such use of glass was practised to any extent in classical times, it is at least unrecorded. A mode of painting with the materials of glass upon glass, which is in fact enamelling, had indeed been common for many centuries B.C., but that was mostly if not exclusively for opaque effects visible rather upon than through the surfaces. Such were those pictures upon circular plates of glass which Suetonius describes as ornamenting the walls of Horace's bedroom, and a fair illustration of what such paintings may have been is afforded by a circular plaque discovered early in last century in the cemetery of St. Agnes at Rome, and figured among Buonarrotti's elaborate illustrations of ancient glass.[1] It is a work of painting with and upon glass of the first or second century A.D., and a short description of it is well worth giving here. It formed the foot of a large glass vase or cup, such as was given as a prize to a victor at the public games. The ground of it was blue, and within an arabesque border there was a group of two reclining figures ; one of them was that of a young woman with children and picturesque accessories about her, her dress was silver, her hair of a light chestnut colour, the arabesques and cornucopia being gold ; the male figure, personating a river deity, was of gold, and its drapery silver striped with purple, the water from a vase beneath his arm was sea green ; the fruit carried by one of the children in the folds of its tunic were coloured red and gold, and those in the cornucopia were all of their natural colours, the winged children above them and the crown of flowers carried by one of them were gold and crimson. A small relic of a similar kind of painting was found at Cumæ in 1819 ; it was a panel of vitreous paste, and the subject painted on it was the prow of a ship lying near a pier with a lighthouse upon it, the anchor and a trident being the only accessories.

[1] *Osservazioni sopra alcuni frammenti di vasi antichi di vetro*, 1716.

Another treatment of a similar subject on a glass vessel[1] shows the pier with round arches, the ship being moored in front of the lighthouse, and round the cover a red circle was drawn bordered with fillets of gold and gold spots, surrounded by a garland of flowers painted in red and gold. Such effective illustrations of figure subjects painted in various colours upon glass could not fail to have become general, as imitations of marbles and alabaster were, among the glass plaques commonly used for ornament, inlaid upon walls, but only a few smaller examples have been found. Among relics of similar art of about A.D. 200, a remarkable disk was found at Cologne in 1866, covered with gold illumination of sacred subjects with many colours introduced. Among them was one of Daniel clothed in a tunic of crimson and gold, with lions on each side and trees rising up behind coloured emerald green. In the subject of the three figures in the fiery furnace the flames are painted red. The water round the monster, from whose mouth Jonah is emerging, is coloured blue; and other subjects such as the Nativity, Isaac, and the paralytic carrying his bed, have backgrounds of emerald coloured trees. The enamelled colours are opaque, and the effects entirely upon the surface.[2] Other examples might be adduced, but these may suffice to show how glass was painted in its earliest days.

The representation of ornament and pictorial designs by gilding alone, which became common at Rome in and after the second century (A.D.) was a form of art that was developed with very great beauty of effect. It was an art followed by the Alexandrian, Greek, and Roman artists, and is seen in the utmost refinement in two basins found at Canosa, and now in

[1] Campana Collection, Rome.

[2] *Illustrated Catalogue*, Slade Collection, by Mr. Alex. Nesbitt, 1871, page 50. For old Christian glass with occasional colour introduced, *vide Dict. Christ. Antiq.*, vol. i., page 731 and note.

the British Museum, on which the gold design consists of delicate conventional foliage, and flowers springing from a central rosette, and enclosed in a rich border worthy of Greek art of the finest period. The effect is produced by engraving upon thin gold attached to the glass, and protected by another coat above it, a system which subsequently came into common use upon the feet of vases, and on plaques enclosing portraits and groups of figures, emblems, and inscriptions, both Pagan and Christian, during the first four centuries A.D. A remarkable specimen of this work is upon a vase, formerly in Mr. Horace Walpole's collection, representing in one part Cupid and Psyche in a cypress grove, with children playing about them, on another part of which is a draped bust within a wreathed vine branch. On Jewish and early Christian glass in this style elaborate subjects are represented, repeating in miniature those of the catacombs.

The method of painting with glass fused into and upon glass was an art of great antiquity, and is seen in the combination of opaque and transparent ornament found in Phœnician beads and gems, and on Egyptian bottles and small amphoræ decorated with bands of various design, such as chevrons and palmated leaf-like patterns in a great variety of colours. Many of these are of high antiquity ; for instance, there is a small turquoise blue bottle in the Egyptian collection of the British Museum, of which the handle is ornamented with lines of black, white, and yellow on the blue ground, a ring of gold colour round its edge, and on the side a small yellow branch with the hieroglyph of Thothmes the Third in the same colour, *i.e.* B.C. 1600. Among the ruins of Nimrond many relics of coloured glass were found, and as some evidence of their date, there was found with them a vessel of dull white glass bearing the name of Sargon, who reigned

B.C. 722. A very ancient mode of painting with the materials of glass was also that of fusing vitreous enamels on blocks of cement or terra-cotta and on tiles, of which fine examples are illustrated in the works of Botta, Layard, and Place from Nineveh and Korsabad, among which are figures of men and animals, and numerous ornamental devices variously coloured, and used as architectural enrichments inlaid upon walls. In Egypt this had been from early times a favourite mode of ornament. In Phœnicia and Egypt coloured glass with surface ornament of many patterns was equally famous, and in both those countries the first element of glass painting by multiplying its colours had in remote times been brought to such perfection that gems, precious stones, and marbles were successfully imitated, and objects thus falsified in glass were regarded as jewels and called by their names. Such was the emerald sceptre of Sesostris, the great table of a single emerald found in the pyramid of Cheops, and the column in the temple of Hercules at Tyre. Sidon also was celebrated for its art of imitative jewelry of many colours, especially for its jasper and emerald, and for coloured ornaments moulded in relief. Egypt had excelled in the imitation of ruby, emerald, jasper, turquoise, and lapis lazuli, and from Alexandria and later Rome came many of those colours, besides porphyry and onyx, agate, sard, and sapphire. Imitative obsidian was also made at Rome, where Pliny describes statuettes of Augustus as "vitri obsidiani." The imitative murrhine, of which the original material was of fabulous value among the dilettanti of Rome,[1] was made at Thebes, if the authority of Arrian is to be trusted, "vasa vitrea et murrhina in urbe Diospoli elaborata;" and at Alexandria, on the authority of Pliny, "fit et album et murrhinum imitatum." Its

[1] W. King, *Precious Stones*, 1865, and *Antique Gems*, 1860.

imitation was, with the exception of that of pure rock crystal, the most costly of all glass, and, if truly represented by the few specimens that remain, it affords a rich effect of wavy streaks of indigo, purple, green, and white, blending into each other with beautiful opalescence.

One of the most effective representations of pictorial design in ancient glass was that of cameo relief, such as the Portland and Aldjo vases, the small blue amphora in the museum at Naples, and other known specimens. The subject on the first of these is the meeting of Peleus and Thetis, with other figures among the rocks and trees of Mount Pelion. The Neapolitan vase has also a cameo surface of blue ornamented with elaborate subjects in white relief, the principal of which are groups of children in a vineyard plucking and treading the grapes and playing on musical instruments, very gracefully designed. This had long been a favourite style of work in glass, and we find glass copies of fine cameo gems in many colours to have been worn at Athens in the palmiest days of its arts.[1] At Rome in the time of the empire the use of glass for coloured ornament became universal, and walls, ceilings, and friezes were inlaid with painted panels of it, and figures and pictures in relief, as in the theatre of Scaurus, the baths of Agrippa, and in private houses, as in that of Horace mentioned above, and the famous house of Firmus, the rich merchant and petty tyrant of the time of Aurelian, which is described by his biographer, Vopiscus, as encrusted with "vitreæ quadraturæ" (glass pictures); and as Statius describes that of Claudius Etruscus, "effulgent cameræ vario fastigia vitro." Ceilings in his time were usually painted and enriched with ornamental medallions, cameos, and panels of figure subjects, and these "were brilliant with coloured glass."

[1] Boekh, *Corp. inscrip.*, n. 150.

Such are a few well-known examples selected as sufficient at least to indicate the method of using coloured glass for ornament and painting with glass upon glass among the nations of antiquity, but it will be noticed throughout that there is neither relic nor record of actual glass painting depending on translucency for its effect. Of the artists themselves and their monograms many are known, but not upon glass assignable to a time earlier than the close of the Roman republic. Four of the best known of them were Sidonians, and the names of most of them were Greek, such as Alexandros and Enniôn, whose name is stamped on glass found on the site of the ancient Panticape, near Kertch on the Bosphorus, and like other artists he added "εποιει" (he made it) to his name. Ariston and Neôn are two others who sign themselves as Sidonians; and Eirenaios of Sidon, whose name is signed on an amber-coloured seal, and his date is indicated by a blue medallion apparently taken from an intaglio gem of the Emperor Caligula. Artas of Sidon is a name well known by his bilingual stamps of various colours in Greek and Latin, to which he commonly adds in Greek that "he made this"; as also Nicocles, who designates himself of Sparta; and Dorus the Rhodian. It may not, however, be a matter of certainty whether these were the signatures of the artists or of merely the makers of the glass, but it is probable that, as was the case in the Christian middle ages, the maker and the artist were often the same, for glass was not then used as now for the commonest purposes of life, but when employed as an art manufacture its works were individual productions, and were as much or more valued for their coloured and gold ornamentation than for their material or form; so when found stamped "Ariston of Sidon made this," or "Eirenaios did it," it is fair to infer generally that we have the artist's mark.

It is in vain that we search for positive information of translucent glass painting till the tenth or eleventh century A.D. Many theoretical conclusions about the origin of it have been drawn; as by Winckelmann, whose idea is a very possible one, that the mosaics in glass tesseræ and sectile marble marquetry, of walls and floors, suggested similar designs in windows; another German antiquary supposes its derivation from the curtains and carpets used before the introduction of glass in windows, the figures and patterns of their embroidery having suggested the same on glass; another advocate for the early use of glass painting in classical times conceives that when Martial wrote, "Sed rus est mihi magnus in fenestrâ," he might have had a window painted like a landscape. But this is properly explained by Mazois in his *Palace of Scaurus*, describing the method of closing and decorating windows before the use of glass, where he adds that the Romans usually "closed their lowest windows with iron grills, and those of the floors above were ornamented with cases full of plants and flowers, which gave to each room a pleasant and gardenesque effect ('quelque chose de gai et de champètre')." The employment of glass in windows, although quite commonly used in other ways, appears not to have become by any means rapidly universal, if we may judge by the employment of transparent alabaster in the windows of the south aisle of the cathedral of Torcello, early in the eleventh century, and at San Miniato at Florence, at a time when glass was practically common and glass mosaic universal. Many quotations are made which go no farther than to prove the use of coloured glass, and possibly of a mosaic pattern, as in the small square panes set in the pierced slabs of marble which formed the windows of Sa. Sophia at Constantinople, and as Prudentius, of the fourth and

early fifth century, describes the large coloured windows in the first church of St. Paul at Rome. Ciampini states among the acts of the Emperor Honorius (A.D. 400) that in rebuilding the church of Sa. Agnese he decorated it with richly-coloured glass. The church built by St. Patient at Lyons, A.D. 450, is described by S. Apollinaris as having windows decorated "versicoloribus figuris" and "sapphiratos lapillos." So too St. Fortunatus, Bishop of Poictiers, at the end of the sixth century, wrote of the effect of coloured glass in the interior of the church of Notre Dame, built by Childebert; and Anastasius, the librarian at Rome, in his *Life of Leo III.*, A.D. 795, writes of the enrichments of the basilica of St. John Lateran by that builder and art-loving Pope "Fenestras de absidâ ex vitro diversis coloribus conclusit." St. Philibertæ, the founder of the abbey of Jumiegés, about A.D. 655, introduced glass into the windows there; but these are only modestly described as pleasant to read by, "Lumen optabile tribuens legentibus," which suggests the greenish and otherwise imperfectly white glass of earlier times to have been the kind introduced into England by the workers in glass brought from France by St. Benedict Biscop in the latter part of the seventh century, and St. Wilfrid for his churches, described by Bede, at Hexham, York, and Ripon.

At last, in the middle of the ninth century, we come upon a definite statement of a window filled with a picture mosaic of transparent glass, which appears to me the earliest notice known. Gregorius, in his *History of Mediæval Rome*, produces a passage from the pontificals, recording the restoration of the church of Sa. Maria in Trastevere at Rome by Pope Benedict VIII. in 855. It was on the site of the first church that had been built by Pope Callixtus. The windows are there described as ornamented with coloured design of

transparent glass mosaic, "Fenestras vero vitreis coloribus, et picturâ musivi decoravit." It would have been hard to believe that in the studied beauty of such a building as that, and of another still more magnificent—viz. the basilica of St. Paul—that the windows described as being of glass of many colours could have been a mere network of confusion without device; but that they would have represented, in transparent glass, the ornamental designs already common upon the architecture, walls, and pavement. In that quotation we have, therefore, the evidence confirmatory of so natural a deduction.

This method of ornamenting windows was at that time adopted in the Mahomedan buildings in the East. The glass was inlaid in a diaper pattern on the outer side of a framework of plaster, the inner side of which was level with the interior wall, and was protected outside by an open reticulation of tiles. The glass was very thin, the depth of colouring not necessarily depending on its thickness. The deepest ruby is hardly ever more than an eighth of an inch thick in Gothic glass, strengthened by being spread on a basis of pure white. The oriental glass was simply the ruby without the white. So too were the other colours. That thin glass was set in frames of which the openings showed many patterns, some being geometrical and some having the form of plants and flowers growing from a vase, which became a common subject in oriental wall mosaic. In the more ancient or in the wealthier mosques this framework was of pierced marble, in others it was of plaster; and the glass was cemented to the back of the framework with colours arranged according to the carved or moulded device.

The only other case that I can discover of this style of windows, and use of glass in the Christian art of Western Europe, is in the history of the con-

vent of Monte Cassino. Its historian Leo, recording the rebuilding of the church of that convent by the Abbot Desiderius between the years 1050 and 1071, describes the windows in the nave, the sanctuary, and the aisles, and states that the artists were obtained from Constantinople, who were expert in the art of glass and mosaic. The windows of the nave and sanctuary he describes as of glass, set in lead, and strengthened with iron bars; but those in the aisles on each side were *worked in plaster with patterns*, equally beautifully as the others.[1] These last were precisely of the same kind as the oriental windows I have just described. The whole account of that great convent of Monte Cassino is a most interesting record, going into great variety of detail, for the antiquary and lover of old art invaluable. It may have been that in the earlier examples to which I referred — viz. those of Sa. Agnese of the fifth century and of Pope Leo III. of the eighth century, and those of the basilica of St. Paul outside Rome—the construction and design may have been such as those about which there remains no doubt at Monte Cassino and in the church of Sa. Maria in Trastevere, but the accounts of them are not *definitely* so. The "versicoloribus figuris" (*i.e.* variously coloured *patterns*) in the windows of St. Patient's Church at Lyons, A.D. 450, can hardly have been other than of transparent glass mosaic; and, *if so*, they are the earliest recorded, but those of the Trastevere at Rome are the earliest *plainly described* as "*picturâ musivi*," A.D. 855.[2]

[1] "Quæ vero in lateribus utriusque porticus sunt gypseas quidem sed equé pulcras effecit."

[2] In the small square reticulation of the pierced windows, A.D. 538, of Sa. Sophia, Constantinople, "tenui pariete fenestellis vitreis pleno," and in those described by Gregory of Tours, A.D. 525, "fenestras ex more habens quæ vitro tignis incluso clauduntur" may have possibly been of this kind also, but coloured glass is in neither case certain.

That painting figures and subjects on glass was continued to be practised at Constantinople might be naturally inferred from its common use quite early in the days of the Roman Empire; but the question is whether the art of painting such subjects on transparent glass, as it began to show itself in Europe about A.D. 1000, originated at that head-quarter of art traditions, Constantinople, or where? The story of the portrait of the Emperor Constantine the Seventh, sent by him in the year 949 to the Caliph Abd-ur-rahmon,[1] and stated to have been executed upon coloured glass, is a description that does not settle the question, being equally applicable to the old opaque glass system or to a cameo, or even of etched gold, which was often used on a coloured ground. Indeed, the invention of glass painting as an art which began to be applied to windows is not easily timed and placed. A learned antiquary[2] claims that honour for his city, Limoges; but though something may be said for it, nothing can be proved to to that effect. Filiasi, in his curiosities of mediæval commerce,[3] states that artificers in glass were sent from Constantinople to France in A.D. 687, and these were, in all probability, artists and not merely manufacturers of glass, which was well known at Limoges before that date, as St. Ouen, describing the entry of St. Eloi into that city, about A.D. 650, adds that a number of persons got into the church of St. Sulpice by breaking through two large glass windows near the entrance. An independent testimony as to the early use of glass by the French is also afforded by the monk Theophilus, who wrote that "Franci in hoc opus peritissimi," and "quidquid in fenestrarum preciosa verietate diliget Francia;" but no place

[1] Vitreous art, Manchester Exhibition, Augs. Franks.
[2] The Abbé Texier, *Peinture sur verre en Limousin.*
[3] *Saggio sul antico commercio.*

is specified. Certainly Limoges, as an ancient city of Roman foundation and preserving the traditions of Roman arts, may have been early a centre of this art and of trade in it, as by the latter part of the twelfth century it had established its fame for it and the associated art of enamel; but long before that date both the arts of enamelling and glass painting had been successfully established in Lorraine and the Rhenish provinces of Germany.

The often-quoted passage from the records of the Abbey of St. Benignus at Dijon describes the figure of St. Paschasia, as painted in a glass window of the church, which was rebuilt there A.D. 1001. The annalist, writing in 1052, mentions this window with admiration, as existing in his time, and known as an ancient one. His words are, "Antiquitus facta, et usque ad nostra perdurans tempora eleganti permonstrabat picturâ;" but how far this antiquity may reach beyond, if beyond at all, the rebuilding of that church, he does not state. That abbey had been much favoured by Charles le Chauve (who died in A.D. 877), and the previous church had been rebuilt in his time. It is also known that that king was a great patron of "glaziers," under which name glass painters were included at that time, by his having granted, at the Abbey of St. Amand, to two glaziers, Regenulf and Balderic, in A.D. 863, two houses "en jouissance commune avec l'abbaye." If that window of St. Paschasia was really so "antiquitus facta" as to have been brought from that first church, it certainly would be the first painted window on record; but the window no more exists, and nothing can be more definitely known about it. At any rate its date would not be later than the earliest years of the eleventh century.

This was precisely the time when the famous St.

Bernwald, bishop of Hildesheim, in northern Germany, at the end of the tenth century, and fifty or sixty years later the Cardinal Abbot Deiderius, at Monte Cassino, in Southern Italy, established their schools of art, which spread their influence far and wide among the deepest shadows of the middle ages. A century or more before that date an impulse had been given to the arts by the works of Charlemagne; but the times were too disturbed for any artistic influence to be long maintained after his death. About the year 977 a more peaceful era was begun, in the days of Otho II., who had married in 972 a Greek princess, Theophania, daughter of the Byzantine emperor Romanus the Second; and through her interest many artists were invited from Constantinople. Otho died early, leaving his infant son to the care of the empress, whose chaplain, Bernward, became bishop of Hildesheim, and died there in 1021. He was a man thoroughly imbued with the love of art, working with his own hands at the completion of his cathedral, and establishing a school with many native pupils under the Byzantine artists then living there. The eight cathedrals established by Charlemagne in that part of his empire became, as Gibbon writes of them, "the first schools and cities of that savage land, and the religion and humanity of the children atoned in some degree for the massacre of the parents." Hildesheim was one of these; and Cologne, subsequently the residence of the empress, became the next centre whence the cultivation of fine art was developed in northern Europe. Enamelling was a favourite art there; and the names of two enamel painters, Gilbertus of Cologne and Nicholas of Verdun, are preserved from those early times.

Glass painting was an art nearly allied to enamelling from the similarity of the materials and apparatus, and frequently pursued by the same persons, and it is

to that part of Germany, Lorraine, Alsace, and the neighbouring Rhine provinces that we may look with some confidence, if not for its actual origin, at least for the earliest development of that form of it which was developed in the middle ages. At Neüviller, on the lower Rhine, is a relic of perhaps the oldest existing painted window. The original church was built there in 741, and the present church has attached to it what appears to be a part of that more ancient building, in which is a small window painted with the figure of St. Thomas Martyr. The ground colour of it is ruby, and within a border of conventional foliage the half-length figure is draped with a blue cloak fastened at the neck with a double brooch, and round the head is a white rayed nimbus with the name of the saint above. The design is of extreme Byzantine style.[1]

At the Benedictine abbey of Tegernsee, in Bavaria, have been preserved letters written between the years 982 and 1000, and among them one from the abbot relating to the death of the Empress Theophania (A.D. 999), and desiring to institute an annual memorial of her. It is recorded in the annals of that abbey that glass works were established there in the year 1003, and the records exist of many commissions for painted windows having been received there, to be supplied to distant places, with the directions as to the subjects to be delineated in them.[2] This establishment appears to have lasted for a great length of time, for the name of Eberhardt as one of its glass painters is preserved there in a document of the thirteenth century, relating to the amount paid to him by Duke Albert of Austria. The monk Theophilus, from whom the earliest account of glass painting is obtained, lived, if not at the time, certainly very shortly after the death of the Empress

[1] Lasterie, *Peinture sur verre*, Appendix.

[2] Baron de Schauenberg, *Peinture sur verre.* Société litéraire de Strasburg. 1865.

Theophania. His proper name appears to have been Rüdiger, or latinised Rugerus, that of Theophilus being his name assumed as a monk. He was not a Greek, but by the adoption of that name he exhibited his Greek sympathies, and his writings bear witness to Byzantine influence. The first mediæval writer who mentions his work, *Diversarum Artium Schedula,* states that he received it from a monastery in Germany, and the principal and completest copies of it appear to have been traced to that country.[1] In a thirteenth-century MS. copy of it found at Cambridge, and now in the British Museum, it is implied that the author was a Lombard, as the work begins with these words, "Sic incipit Tractatus Lombardicus qualiter temperantur colores ad depingendum," for which it may be supposed some evidence existed at that time (nearly two centuries after his death), but which is now lost. A claim has been made for that abbey of Tergernsee as that at which he lived;[2] and putting all the strings of the story together, there appear to be some fair reasons for that inference. He was deeply versed in all the arts then practised by the Greeks, on which account such a man had special claims to be received among those artists who had been invited to the court of Theophania, if not from Constantinople, at least from among the pupils of the Schola Greca at Rome, or from the north of Italy, where works under Greek artists were at that time attracting attention. The change of the Empress's residence to Cologne, the works going on at Heidelberg, Bamberg, and in other parts of Germany, and finally her death, may be supposed to have scattered the original company of artists, and in some way the abbey of Tergernsee was beholden to her, as shown by the abbot's letter referred to above; and the

[1] Hendrie's *Theophilus*, Introduction.

[2] Baron Schauenberg: a lecture delivered to the Société litéraire at Strasburg, 1865.

establishment of glass painters there was evidently one of leading importance, which the records of its wide employment testify. This Rugerus or Rüdiger, whose artistic education may have been among the Byzantine artists engaged in Lombardy, and whence his title Lombardicus, but whose literary works have been mainly traced to Germany, is believed to have retired some time after the Empress's death to the quiet seclusion of that abbey, and there to have written his famous work, which is one that could only have been produced by an artist of great practical experience, and embracing detailed instruction on painting in general, carving and moulding ivory, mosaic, glass painting, art metal work, enamelling, organ-building, etc.; and he wrote as others of his time and after him have done under a sense of the sacredness of art employed in the service of religion, begging for "the prayers of those of his readers who have profited by him . . . as he wrote not for human praise nor for temporal recompense, but to glorify God by helping and advancing men."

Whence then can we trace the origin of the art as Theophilus teaches it, and as it is still practised in our own days? The completeness of his instructions implies the knowledge of an art then in full practice, but whence did he get it? Among the artists at Constantinople there is no record of its use. In Rome and in Italy it was not at all generally practised till centuries later, although Heraclius, who lived at Rome, whose work is specially designated as *de coloribus et artibus Romanorum*, and who is believed by sufficient collateral evidence to have lived in the earliest years of the eleventh century, wrote of glass painting in terms similar to those of Theophilus. The employment of coloured glass in windows, and the mosaic designs used in them were in his time very common throughout the East and in Italy, but not glass *painting* as he de-

scribes it; nor has it left even a silhouette of its existence in the East. In France and in Germany the exigencies of climate encouraged a far more general use of glass, and the Byzantine or semi-Greek artists from Rome, who from the days of Charlemagne worked there, had brought with them to the more northern countries such a knowledge of the kindred arts of enamelling, mosaic, and wall painting as would be almost involuntarily transferred to the broad surfaces of the glass windows then but lately come into use, and certainly suggested by them.

By all the positive and negative evidence that can be found, it appears that glass painting began about that time, and not improbably making its first essays from previous examples of painting on glass with some distemper medium. It is impossible to say at what place that art originated. From the similarity of the instructions given for it by Heraclius at Rome, and Theophilus in Germany, writing about half a century later, the probability of a common origin is inevitably suggested, and that one only place was Constantinople. The first elements of the art may very possibly have been realised there where glass was used in every artistic form, and have been sufficiently matured to have provided both those writers with their knowledge. Constantinople may even still earlier have received it from late Roman artists—but all is theory—the fact being that it never rose at either of the great centres to a position of practical importance. If it had ever lived in either of them, practically it died; preserved only in the written secrets of medical and artistic manuscripts. That part of Europe, where Charlemagne gave the first and Theophania the second impulse to the cultivation of the arts, appears to have been the site of its practical origin in the form subsequently developed, as we now know it. It was evidently well understood and prac-

tised by Theophilus, and therefore initiated before his time, but the completeness of it had been attained at the time he wrote by the perfecting of the enameller's materials and processes applied to the burning-in the design upon the surface of the glass. The artists for whom Charlemagne had sent were by his special order restricted to such as could be provided from within the limits of his own empire, *i.e.* from Rome and Lombardy—for in Germany there were few if any; but even if from Rome, they were half Byzantine; and it is a plain fact that those artists who worked at his "chapel" at Aix have left no record of this art, nor *did they practise it there*, though glass was common to them in their use of mosaic. It was in their time that the great ecclesiastical establishments in Germany were founded, and the arts, freeing themselves from either Roman or Byzantine influences, became nationalised in them. Those artists cannot have failed to leave their pupils and their influence; and within the limit of a century and a half between their great patron's death and the arrival of their successors at the court of Theophania that art appears to have had its north European birth; and from those men, then and there by all the facts that reasonable inference allows, Theophilus, *Presbyter et Monachus*, German by birth or German by adoption, but Greek by education, learnt his art, obtained his experience, and subsequently wrote his treatise at the close of the eleventh century in his retirement at Tegernsee.

The art spread widely and rapidly, as it is known by the records or remains of it at distant places in Germany, France, and England. Still Lorraine and the Rhenish provinces, as the fountain-head of all such arts, north of the Alps, held their own, and it was thence that the Abbot Suger sent A.D. 1147 for the artists in enamel to complete the enrichment of his

cathedral of St. Denis, near Paris. The extent to which glass painting had reached by his time is illustrated by the statement that his windows "are the works of skilled masters from various nations." In Suger's own account of the administration of his abbey he describes the windows as inlaid with sapphires, which reminds one of the habit in very ancient days of calling glass objects by the names of the jewels they imitated; and he states that the treasury of his abbey was opened to the glass painters. With regard to the use of valuable materials in the production of glass we may remember what Pliny wrote about the finest glass of the East that it was made with rock crystal; and, nearer to our own time, that the same process was used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the best glass-houses of Venice;[1] but Suger's record is very positive about it, as he writes "vitri vestiti,[2] et saphirorum materiæ; . . . materiam saphirorum locupletem administravit." The use of rock crystal in glass making is at once understood from that crystal being the purest natural form of silica, the fundamental material of glass; and the use of sapphires is simply explained on reference to the directions of Theophilus, where in his twelfth chapter he directs how the deep blue glass was to be made which forms the characteristic ground and diapers of the early windows of that time, and of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries generally as at Canterbury, Chartres, Cologne, etc., which he describes as being made from "saphireum" produced from tesseræ of "pagan mosaics" the "saphiri Greci pounded between two porphyry slabs," which melted down and spread and fused upon a sheet of

[1] King, *Precious Stones*, p. 345.

[2] "Vitri vestiti," coated glass; *i.e.* a sheet of white glass with another of sapphire or ruby fused together. Ruby glass was made in this manner throughout the middle ages, and in modern times other colours are so treated for effects of abrasion.

white glass formed "tables of sapphire very precious," "and useful in windows;" not that all blue glass was made out of the tesseræ of despoiled mosaics, for similar tesseræ and other objects of the same colour were at that time commonly used in the East and at Constantinople, whence his technical traditions had come, and where the secrets of the craft were preserved from the treasury of antiquity. Those cubes of blue glass which Theophilus describes as saphiri Greci would have ranked as gems in Suger's collection, and were without doubt the reputed sapphires used by his glass painters.

Such was the novel and startling development of fine art at that time that the splendour-loving abbot found himself the object of severest criticism. He had been for long associated with royalty, as the favourite of Louis le Gros, and at his death the regent for the young Louis VII.; his tastes had been trained to the standard of all that their courts and wealth could produce, and as Abbot of St. Denis it was but consistent with such an education to lavish all that the arts of his time could produce to complete his abbey church. But this burst of artistic splendour brought him under the lash of the great Cistercian St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, who remonstrated with severity worthy of his order, launching at him a quotation from Persius, "Say, O high priests, what place has gold in the sanctuary?" and "But I say, tell me, O ye poor, what worth has gold in the holy place? your church glitters with wealth upon its walls, but it is barren to the poor; . . . He has covered his stones with gold, and has left his children naked!" Such words and sentiments with all their worth and weight, were the expressions, and not impossibly the exaggerated expressions of the great leader of a religious order whose practice was regulated upon the severest of self-imposed poverty;

for the special characteristic of such institutions as the Abbey of St. Denis was, even to a fault, the ministry and doles of charity, and attendance on the sick poor. On that very ground, therefore, such denunciations as those of the great St. Bernard have been ignored or contradicted by the enthusiasm of all generations of men, whose impulse repudiated such limits, and who, in the spirit of that ancient wisdom which had grouped as three Graces, the true, the beautiful, and the good, have through all time expressed their devotion by offering their best; that best being the most beautiful they could find, their spontaneous, most natural, and truest sacrifice. Such men as have covered their temple walls with gold have not been commonly such as left their brethren naked. Even the Cistercians soon yielded to the inevitable impulse; and dissatisfied with that beautiful grisaille of silvery white glass which was due to their influence, and adopted far and wide in the thirteenth century, soon yielded to the common craving for colour; and in their windows were painted, contrary to all his orders, the figure of their own St. Bernard, and panels, pictured with all the incidents of his life; and we who in England can grieve over the ruins of the Cistercian Tintern, have at least in them the fairest architectural example of what the beauty-loving genius of their Order could produce; and in the eastern windows of Lichfield Cathedral we see the consummation at which their art of glass painting could arrive, in the glass brought there from the desecrated Cistercian convent of Herckenrode. Such works were interdicted when in the first days of their piety their convent was established in the twelfth century, for in their cartularies are preserved these severe injunctions of their founder, "Let the glass of their windows be white, without pictures or crosses, . . . let not sculptures and paintings be made in any of our churches or monasteries;

we interdict them, because while attention is drawn to them, the use of profitable meditation, and the discipline of religious gravity is apt to be neglected";[1] but the experience of life and human infirmity appears to have taught them, as it has taught others, that fine art inspired by sacred motive is most useful, not only to teach the ignorant, but to fill the void of vacant minds.

Thus began the career of that art which everywhere followed in close companionship with pointed architecture from east to west, developing its styles side by side with it, assimilating the best of its crisp and graceful ornament, and combining more than any other of the associated arts with the beauty of architectural effect. Those styles were as much marked by special technicalities as by their variety of artistic composition. The glass painter used no colours, but taking the various tints and hues produced by the glass-founder, he painted upon them in monochrome, producing by the simple process of a few dark lines a perfect clearness of design, that left the transparency of the glass unimpeded, glowing like a sheet of jewelry. This was pre-eminently the case in the earliest style; for then the medallions in which the figure subjects were designed were so crowded, or the figures themselves so small, that at the most moderate distance the whole window resolved itself into a display of jewels; as though the object of the artist had been less to illustrate a story than to glorify the sacred place by the splendour of its illumination. After a while this system was modified by improvement in the art of drawing, when single and grouped figures became more prominent, and architectural accessions and canopies took such a place in the design as to suggest that the architect himself had

[1] *Annales Cistercienses.* Lyons, 1642.

drawn them. If we may judge from the works of Wilars de Honecort,[1] an architect of the 13th century, who has left among his drawings scores of studies of figures, draperies, and proportion, the figures in the windows may sometimes have been the work of the architect also; for in those days he was apt to be more than in name alone the chief artist. Arts were less subdivided in those times than they are now, so the glass painter often embraced in his work the whole art of his profession from the first preparation of the glass to the painting of the finished window; as in the case of the Alsatian glass painter Jean de Kirkheim, who had executed great works in Strasburg Cathedral (about A.D. 1340), where he is described as "Vitreator factor vitrorum, glasseator, Pictor."

The interest of all such work done in England in those times has been grievously impaired by the wholesale destruction of records, such as foreign abbeys and other great establishments have been more fortunate in preserving, unless some at least of our own still lie undisturbed beneath the sacred dust of the record office. The violence of their destruction was, however, sometimes equalled by the ingenuity of their preservation, as of those of Newstead Abbey which lay for centuries unsuspected in the brass ball of its lectern, now standing in the choir of Southwell Minster. A story has indeed been preserved in the cartularies of the Abbey of Braine near Soissons of a painted window having been sent in 1153 for the east end of that abbey by Matilda of Boulogne, Queen of King Stephen of England (or by her order previous to her death in 1152) to Agnes de Baudemont ("sa parente"), foundress of that abbey; but no more is known of it; and whether the glass were of English work or not is not recorded. The

[1] Facsimile of the Sketchbook of Vilars de Honecort. London. Willis. 1859.

church is now a ruin. There is no doubt that much glass used in England at that time was foreign, as for instance the windows for Rivaulx Abbey, which were sent from France in 1140. It is not known where the contemporary windows were painted which William of Malmesbury describes, with great admiration, in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral, windows which must have perished in the fire which destroyed the whole of the choir in the year 1174, nearly 30 years after his death; but the employment of a French architect, William of Sens (at that time famous for its glass), to rebuild that choir, significantly refers the association of art works in that place to a foreign origin. The earliest recorded commission for a painted window in England appears to have been in the early part of the thirteenth century, quoted by Horace Walpole, vol. i. p. 7, to the effect of an order by Henry III. for the whitewashing of the Chapel of St. John in the Tower, and for making three glass windows in which were to be represented "a little Virgin Mary holding the child, and the Trinity, and St. John the Apostle." Very much painting was ordered by the King as decorative work in rooms and chapels—at Woodstock, at Westminster, and Winchester, etc., which suggests considerable artistic activity; but there is no reference that can clear up the nationality of the artists.

The early glass painters in all countries appear to have rarely signed their works. The few names that I have already mentioned are preserved not in windows but in archives; the earliest known window signature quoted by general writers being that of Clement of Chartres (vitrearius Carnotensis) in a window of the cathedral at Rouen (about A.D. 1270). It is not till 1303 that we come upon the name of an English glass painter which is preserved in the history of Exeter Cathedral, where for 140 feet of painted

glass and other such work in the windows there, "Walter the glazier" was paid various sums. By reasonable inference, work may be attributed to native artists in the thirteenth century from the architectural style of the designs, and by the character of drawing in known English illuminated MSS.; but by the end of that century and beginning of the fourteenth there can be no doubt about English glass painters; for a few years after Walter of Exeter, the name of Robert of York is preserved, as having been paid in 1338 at the rate of twelve pence per foot for his painted glass.[1] He painted the great west window of York Cathedral. At the close of that century (A.D. 1391) the name of another glass painter is found among the records of Exeter Cathedral, Robert Lyen, whose name rather suggests a foreign origin; but as he is designated "glazier and citizen of Exeter," he may be accepted as an Englishman; his work was the present east window, which is composed partly of his own work and partly the adaptation of the former window; and happily for himself and for the good of his work he was paid by yearly salary, and thus trusted to do his best as every good artist ought to be; and paid extra on some detail in the use of old and new glass, and so much weekly for an assistant.[2]

The high estimation of men of this craft in former times has been signalised by the special protection and liberties granted to them; as by an edict of Constantine A.D. 337 the "vitrarii and diatritarii" (artificers and artists in glass and glass cutting) were associated with architects and painters in exemptions from all public taxes and imposts. In the same manner the Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian relieved the artists in glass and mosaic from all public charges.

[1] Weale's *Quarterly Papers*, vol. i.
[2] *Vide* Britton's *History of Exeter Cathedral.*

At Venice the master glaziers of Murano were honoured by high social privileges, admitting them to intermarriage with the Venetian nobility, and to the rank of nobles with their titles inscribed in their Libro d'oro. The island was governed by magistrates independent of Venice, and by a special code of laws, one of which assigned the penalty of death to any one who disclosed the secrets of the craft. Both Charles V. and Charles VI. of France granted special liberties to glass painters "peintres vitriers," that they should be free of all taxes and rates "garde de porte, guet, arriere guet, et autres subventions quelconques," A.D. 1390. In Lorraine the "gentilshommes verriers" received the right of nobility from the Dukes of Lorraine in the fifteenth century. In Normandy they possessed local privileges of freedom and social position as "gentilshommes artistes verriers Normans." Early in the fifteenth century René, King of Anjou, was a patron of this art, and himself an adept at it; as described among the incidents of his varied life, when made prisoner in 1430 by the Count Vaudemont, he was imprisoned at Dijon, where he relieved his tedious hours by glass painting, some of his subjects being portraits of Philippe le Bon and himself, and ornamental designs principally the emblazonment of coats of arms, which were subsequently presented to the chapel of the Chartreuse and preserved there. Of all window inscriptions, York Cathedral contains one of the most remarkable, showing the social position of the glass painter of the day, when the knighted mayor of that city, Sir John Pety, was also the glass painter of its cathedral, and of other churches in his city. The opportunity has been taken of making one of his works in the cathedral a memorial to him, by the introduction of a kneeling figure of himself and an inscription beneath it to this effect, "Orate pro animâ Johannis Pety, glasiarii et Majoris Ebor: qui obiit 12th Nov. 1508."

In no country has the destruction of works of this frail art been at once so wanton and lamentable as in Italy. Those works were numerous and beautiful, some of them from the hands of Italy's greatest masters, but they have disappeared no one knows how, or left to perish from indifference. There was no excuse, as elsewhere, of religious fanaticism or political revolution; for art was a common ground of peace, and even the ferocity of Italian passion paused before it, and vengeance found no pleasure in its destruction. It was an art that had not at once captivated the national taste, as elsewhere in Christendom. With the general use of mosaic and wall painting, rude as they were between the decline and revival of the fifth and twelfth centuries, Italian interiors needed no artifice of coloured light to make them pleasant, or to alter the beauty of their natural sunshine. Coloured glass was used as an element of wealth and splendour in a few grand basilicas, but such was the native indifference to it that when Venice, its chief emporium for glass, developed its works, glass painting made no part, and coloured window glass but an insignificant part among its industries. The Venetians were pre-eminently colourists, but in their use of glass it is remarkable that throughout Venetian territory their windows are, with rare exceptions, white. Like pointed architecture, glass painting was in Italy an imported art, and its earliest known works bear such marks of northern relationship that the rich jewelry of the windows of San Francesco d'Assisi would have graced with equal consistency the choirs and chapels of Canterbury or Chartres. The effect of a few fragments of classic art in the Campo Santo at Pisa upon Niccola Pisano is well known. It marked the revival of true art in Italy: and so too with other arts, the works and styles of their northern neighbours, which, on entirely independent principles,

and with a genius specially its own, had grown up and developed before and during his life (1207-78), sufficed to suggest to the appreciative Italian sense the artistic expression of a prevailing and popular idea. So glass painting was accepted and flourished. The literary notices of it are numerous, occurring in local histories, and in biographies, often where least expected. They abound in archives of ancient establishments, recording the names of the artists, the patrons, the subjects, and often the contract of price and time allowed.

Among the memorials of Florence there is preserved an account of a convent outside the Porta a Pinti, formerly occupied by a community of the order of the Gesuati. It had been known by the name of S. Giusto *alle mura*, from its having been built against the walls of the city, and was thus exposed to the ravages of the siege in 1529, when it was entirely ruined. The monks had established themselves there in 1383, and the tenor of their occupations suggests a pleasant picture among the episodes of conventual life. They were famous for their ingenuity in various arts, "in opere di mano eccellenti," and among them pre-eminently for glass painting. Their workroom is described as having a good light on the second floor, and beside it they had their distillery for scents and medicines, and for the preparation of colours. Their prior prepared with his own hands the ultramarine for Pietro Perugino for the frescoes which he painted on the walls of the convent; and for Michael Angelo, upon his undertaking the frescoes on the vaulting of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.[1] They produced also all manner of pleasant things "for the convenience and comforts of life,"

[1] Among the Buonarotti archives at Florence occurs the following letter from Michael Angelo to the prior of the Gesuati at Florence :—

"FRATE JACOPO—I, being about to cause to be painted certain things here, or to paint them, it occurs to me to let you know that I have need

which Lastri[1] describes as "the best and finest that could be imagined;" but although occupied by the special rule of their order in numerous avocations, including those already mentioned, and embroidery, architecture both civil and military, and engineering, they were more especially known as "Frati dipintori di vetri da finestre" (Brethren painters of glass for windows), and for their works at Florence, Perugia, Arezzo, Pisa, and elsewhere, some of the leading artists of the day furnished them with designs, among whom were Fr. Granacci, a pupil of Ghirlandajo, and Pietro Perugino. Other conventual establishments of Florence had also their glass painters of great eminence at that time, and among them one Fra Bernardino di Stefano of Santa Maria Novella, who is called in the necrology of the convent "Magister fenestraram vitrearum optimus," the best of glass painters, who painted the great circular window (still in its place) of the façade of the cathedral at Florence, from the designs of Ghiberti, and two others in the clerestory of the nave, from designs by the same hand.

That art had by this time attained a place of high consideration; indeed before the end of the fourteenth century it had won the national taste throughout northern and central Italy; but like pointed architecture, it rarely penetrated the south. Siena and Pisa had their schools of this art; and in the former place occurs one of the few known window signatures of Italian glass painters of the fourteenth century, viz., that of "Jacopo Castelli," an artist of Siena, in a window of the church of S. Francesco at Pisa in 1390.

of a certain quantity of beautiful blues, and if you can serve me through your brethren here with the quantity which you have, of fine quality and at a just price, before taking it I will pay you here or there as you prefer. —Yours, MICHELAGNIOLO *Sculptor, Rome.*

"*May* 13, 1508."

[1] *L'osservatore Fiorentino.*

Of the school of Pisa many artists names have been preserved, among whom are the two who, about the year 1460, filled with their painted glass the arcade on two sides of the Campo Santo, for the preservation of the frescoes there from the action of the sea breezes, by name B^o. da Scarperia and Leonardo, a Florentine. Among others of that school was one B. Pollini, a Sardinian by birth, whose fame is preserved in the annals of the convent of Santa Caterina, as a great glass painter, "fenestras vitreas operabatur optime," but as a man also of such accomplishments as would have well qualified him for a fellowship in the graceful society of the Oxford College of All Souls in the palmy days of past generations, for he is described in the same annals as "a man highly esteemed, pure in mind, refined in manners, and charming in conversation; he sang well, he wrote beautifully, and was master of his art."[1] He died about 1340.

This art had its Beato Angelico in the person of a young German artist, afterwards known as Fra Beato Giacomo d'Ulma, the son of a merchant at Ulm, whose education in mechanical arts had trained his hand for the neat technicality of glass painting, to which the taste and aptitude of his youth had drawn him. Being impelled by strong religious fervour to visit the tomb of the apostles at Rome, he arrived there at the age of twenty-five in 1432; but his means failing for want of employment, he entered the military service of King Alphonso at Naples. This mode of life, however, proved most distasteful to him, and after four years he travelled homeward, stopping at Bologna, where he entered the order of Frati Predicatori of the convent of S. Domenico; and there he spent a devoted life, succeeding, as, his biographer says, "some other saintly men have done, in making the pursuit of art a means

[1] Michele, *Memorie dei Pittori Domenicani*, v., p. 350, text and note.

toward the perfection of religious life." Here he resumed his favourite art, and after a long life left many important works, of which the best known are the great windows in the church of S. Petronio, executed with the assistance of his favourite pupils Frati Ambrogino and Anastasio, in his adopted city Bologna.

A very different man from this saintly German was the Frenchman from Verdun, whose story has been well told by Vasari, under the name of Guglielmo di Marcilla. The occasion of his coming to Italy was the building at the Vatican for Pope Julius II. by Bramante, which that pope required to be decorated with painted glass, for which Raphael had furnished the designs, and having heard great accounts of a Frenchman of the name of Claude, he invited him to Rome.[1] Guglielmo was a friend of this Claude, and so accomplished in all the technicality of his art that Claude persuaded him to accompany him. Guglielmo had entered the Dominican order, not like the Beato Giacomo for religious reasons, but to escape the secular courts of justice, with which he was threatened for an unfortunate affair in which he had been accidentally implicated. When this trouble had blown over, so far as he was concerned, he yielded to Claude's persuasions, and throwing up his conventual obligations he went to Rome. Not long after their arrival, Claude died of

[1] These windows were destroyed at the siege of Rome by the Connétable de Bourbon in 1527, to make bullets of the lead in which the glass was set. The loss of them is the more to be regretted because the account of them that they were not only executed under the direction of Raphael, but from his designs, is probably true. The direction of all decorative art at the Vatican was consigned to him by Julius II., and to such as Raphael whose art was universal, and nothing too great or too small for it, designs for glass painting would have been but a slight addition to the list. He designed for tapestry as of those of Hampton Court, for carving and inlaid woodwork as in the fine tarsiatura of the church of the Casinensi at Perugia, for mosaic as in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo at Rome, as an architect at the Vatican, and a sculptor in the figure of Jonah in the Chigi chapel, which is by his hand. His only recorded design for glass is thus unhappily lost.

fever, leaving his responsibilities to his companion, who from deficiency of artistic education was thrown into much difficulty. He had the wisdom, however, to place himself at once under tuition, and applying all he learned to his own special art, he attained such eminence, that his works have been allowed by universal judgment to be the masterpieces of that art in Italy. Marchese in his lives of Dominican artists confirms this opinion, for when writing of a certain Fra Bartolomeo of Perugia (who was elected Superior of the Dominican convent there in 1413), as the greatest of native Italian glass painters, after a description of one special work by him in the church of San Domenico, he says of it that "such were its merits in size, composition, and colour, as to yield to none in Italy *save only those* in Arezzo by Giuglielmo di Marcillat."

The stages of progress in this art had been much the same north and south of the Alps; the character of the advance from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century having been from exclusive conventionalism to Nature, from the fourteenth to the fifteenth that of improvement in the higher qualities of design, and in the following century by the introduction of the use of coloured glass enamels, affording to the glass painter as varied a palette as the painter in oil. Guglielmo adopted this system completely. His ambition was to rival in glass all the efforts of the picture and wall painter; and such was his success that Vasari writes in admiration, especially of his works at Cortona and Arezzo, that "one would say that they were composed of living figures and not of coloured and transparent glass, but in truth marvellous pictures." Whether such elaboration was the proper province of so frail a material as glass was a question that these works soon settled in his mind, for he threw up the art and turned fresco painter.

It is remarkable how much the success of this art in Italy was due to northern influence. Notwithstanding its popularity and the eminence in it of many native artists, the invigoration of its styles was greatly due to the infusion of new blood from beyond the Alps. Its best materials were imported; as Vasari says, the best glass for it came from Germany, France, and England, and the best smalti, *i.e.* coloured enamels, were German. With rare exception, the artists who left the greatest mark upon their age were foreign, or the Italian pupils of foreign masters; as the Beato Giacomo from Ulm and the school which he established at Bologna, and Claude and Guglielmo from France, and Pastorino, the pupil of the latter, who executed the great window of the façade of Siena Cathedral from the design attributed to Perino del Vaga (1548-49). At Venice and Treviso a German monk of the minor order of Franciscans, who was known as the Frater Teutonicus, seems to have been the leading spirit of his art in all that neighbourhood early in the fourteenth century. His works became the models of the art, and the copies of them are described as having been carried out in due respect to him, "pictæ ad modum Teutonicum;" numerous works elsewhere are attributed to another foreigner, Luca d'Ollanda, an ideal name, that throughout Italy covers a multitude from Germany and the north.

Baldinucci, in his *Life of Lorenzo Ghiberti*, and giving an account of the windows in the cathedral of Florence, writes that Ghiberti was not only one of the greatest of Italian sculptors, but "being curious in everything appertaining to the arts, he turned his attention to the noble work of that kind of painting which is called the mosaic of coloured glass." Ghiberti, not satisfied with the Italian glass and its painters, having heard of a Florentine who had begun his education as a glass

painter in the convent of the Gesuati at Florence, and had perfected his art at Lubec, represented the case to the council of the Operai. In Lastri's *Osservatore Fiorentino* is given the text of a document drawn up by this council of artificers in 1436, resolving that this accomplished glass painter should be invited to Florence to paint the windows "in Sa. Maria del Fiore; that he should be brought with all his family without cost, and be protected from all harm and loss, that he might work in security, and that his art might reflect honour on his native Florence." Ghiberti designed the windows, and Livi da Gambasso painted them "*in his German manner.*" The window representing the coronation of the Virgin was also painted by him from the design of Donatello.

The grand ruins which add the poetry of regret to the natural beauty of Scotch scenery must once have possessed windows glowing with this art. Two years before the eminent glass painter, just mentioned, Livi da Gambasso came to Florence,—in reply to the invitation dated in 1436,—he was at work in Scotland. Among the same archives is preserved a letter dated August 26, 1434, addressed to him in Scotland, pressing him to come to Florence. It is there recorded as a "Letter written to the master glass painter Gambassi, then in Scotland, and who made works in glass of various kinds, and was held to be the best glass painter in the world." That such an artist should have been engaged there implies no ordinary estimation of that art in Scotland, nor would an artist of such eminence have attended to any but invitations from important persons and for important works. But all have perished, and the record of them is lost.[1]

[1] The writer on this subject in the *Ency. Brit.*, vol. x. p. 670, Mr. Heath Wilson, himself a Scotchman, thus concludes his notice, "It is now vain to express the feeling with which Scotch people must regret the destruction of the works of this excellent artist in Holyrood Chapel." The

The colour-loving Spaniards had of old been successful in their production of artistic glass, in which, in the time of the Roman empire, they had been acknowledged to have rivalled the works at Rome. In Christian times, with the introduction of pointed architecture, they revived the art in its wider form of ornamental windows, but neither so early, nor with the help of designs by their more distinguished native artists, as was the case in Italy. The names of numerous Spanish glass painters have been preserved, but among those who followed that art in Spain so many have foreign designations, or by their names are so evidently of northern origin, such as Mercier, Ulrich, Arnao de Flandre, Albert and Nicolas de Holanda, Karl de Bruga, etc., as to show how Spain, no less than Italy, had availed itself of the genius of the north.

The glass in its cathedrals are as pure as can be found in Europe; but the detail of its history is not so easily obtained as elsewhere. Toledo had been famous for its painted glass as early as the thirteenth century; and from the recorded names of its artists, there appears to have been a continuous succession of native and Flemish glass painters there from the beginning of the fifteenth to that of the eighteenth century; indeed the art had become such a complete speciality there that the chapter of the cathedral established a school of it in 1542, with the provision for a continuous professorship. The windows in that cathedral are very numerous, as might be supposed in so great a building of five aisles, besides their projected chapels; the glass, which

best relics of old Scotch glass are heraldic, of which several exist in the chapel of St. M. Magdalene, Cowgate, Edinburgh, of about A.D. 1556, and a few others elsewhere, as in Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire, dated "Alex. Seton, Lord Fyvie, 1599." In the Stoball Chapel, Cargill, near Perth, some scraps of very rich colours are preserved in the windows. A small portion of coloured glass was found at Melrose Abbey in 1742, *vide Proceedings Soc. Antiq.*, ii. 33, and others from Dunblane Cathedral and Dunfermline Abbey.

is generally of high class, was painted by both native and Flemish artists ; but here, at any rate, Spain holds her own, the finest window being the work of a Spaniard, Gonzalo de Cordova (1510-13). The greatest loss of what by all accounts appear to have been the finest works in Spain was at Burgos, where all the glass of the cathedral was destroyed by an explosion in the Castle in 1813. Near it a Carthusian convent, known as "la Cartuja," illustrates the constant reference to Flanders for glass, whence it was obtained complete for insertion into its windows. It is still in the chapel, but is not of the highest class. The most eminent glass painter in Spain appears to have been Micer Cristobal, who is designated as "Aleman" (1504), but whether he was German, as this would imply, or French, is not certain, the designation Alençon being also associated with his name. His works are in the cathedral of Seville ; but at Avila, Barcelona, and Leon, no less than at Seville and Toledo, and at Oviedo, where the two wheel windows of the transepts are famous works, Spanish artists took their honourable share ; the last who was eminent among them being Sanchez Martinez, who was appointed professor of the school of glass painters at Toledo in 1713, where he wrote a book upon his art, and dedicated it to the chapter of the cathedral.[1]

It would be tedious to attempt any adequate account of the great works of this art in France, Germany, Holland, and Belgium. Their masterpieces are too numerous to be recorded here, or to find a place for their worthy description. The special features of every date and style in France, from the early windows

[1] For notes about this art in various parts of Spain, written with much artistic appreciation, *vide* O'Shea's *Spain and Portugal*. There is great want of a history of this art in Spain. S. Martinez's book might have been very valuable ; but, after diligent inquiry through the best sources, I am unable to find any account of its publication.

of Bourges and Chartres to the latest by Jean Cousin and Pinaigrier, are too well known to need further reference.

The cause of its decline was the same here as elsewhere. The enamellers of Limoges had so developed the production of colours for their art, that being also glass painters, they introduced a system which became universally popular, not only in France, but wherever the art was followed. The ruby, the sapphire, the emerald, the jasper, and other grand and simple colours had been known by very ancient tradition; and chemistry had done but little to effect any changes in the art during the first four centuries of its development. The warm tint that served as early as the thirteenth century, if not earlier, for flesh, and the yellow stain from silver, were among the few mediæval additions to the old list; but at the beginning of the sixteenth century a revolution overthrew the ancient practice, and in place of the grand old-fashioned colours, white glass came into use to be painted upon with enamels, as in oil or water colour; and new technicalities introduced in the previous century now became universal, such as the abrasion of colour on one side of the pane and enamelling it with various colours on the other, and so forth, till glass painting changed its function, and produced cabinet pictures, landscape transparencies, miniatures, and copies of the works of great masters in oil and fresco, as when Bernard Palissy, whose greatest fame had been as a discoverer in the art of coloured pottery, painted on glass copies of Raphael's history of Cupid and Psyche for the family of Montmorency at Ecouen.

In the Netherlands the advance of chemical knowledge had equally prepared the way, as at Limoges, for its application to the colouring of glass: and this style of the art developed greatly in the time of Charles V.

and under the administration of Marguerite d'Autriche, who greatly patronised the glass painters. Among the greatest works thus executed were those in the cathedral of St. Gudule at Brussels, where Jan Haeck and Bernard von Orley, an artist of considerable merit also as an oil painter, carried out this system with great effect, but exhibiting the utter loss of that luminous colour that had been the glory of days then gone by.

In Germany, from the earliest appearance of the art in Europe to its decline, it had continued a national favourite, and its most famous artists have left their influence upon its compositions; but they are not always easily identified with their works for want of signatures. Aldegrever, a Westphalian by birth, began his early art experiences in France by designs for glass painting. His signature is on some fine glass in the choir of the church at Conches; but he soon discontinued this class of work, and entered the school of engravers under Albert Durer at Nuremberg. Of Albert Durer himself there is no doubt about his influence on this art, but no works can with certainty be assigned to him; the only ones with any probability of truth being those on the north side of the nave of the cathedral at Cologne, that are associated with his name. His biographer describes him as "the founder of an improved school of more correct perspective and architecture, and for sacred subjects, particularly for *painted glass;*" and, indeed, as he worked in so many arts, it is fairly possible that this may have been one of them; especially as it is known from entries in his diary that glass painters were among his intimate friends, where for instance, in the year 1521, he has written—"presented to Master Aert, the glass-painter, a copy of the life of Our Lady;" and in another place—"I presented two of my great works to Kœnig, the glass painter." Braun and Dierrick, who had distinguished themselves in the

same art, were also among his friends; but with respect to the personal history and the works of these men, the loss by the violence of the Gueux outbreak at the establishment of the Inquisition in that country by Philip II., and the loss of all that is precious in the authority of documentary history by the great fire at Liége, is incalculable.

The influence of his school is noticeable far and wide. The grand windows of St. Jaques at Liége bear witness to it. Some of those in the church of Fairford in Gloucestershire, have been attributed to him from a casual remark by Van Dyck, who "came to see the Fairford windows, and told me the drawing was by Albert Durer;"[1] those windows were brought there between 1491 and 1500, at which last year Albert Durer was twenty-nine years of age. But it is not his genius alone that can be thus plainly traced: for the refined style of the Van Eycks, and the still more refined school of Hemling, left their fair impress on the glass painting of their age. There are a good many relics of what once were the works of this late Flemish school in England; and it would have been well if there had been none other. The two Crabeths at Gouda had carried their special style and technicality to the utmost limit that it would bear; and those who developed a school upon their style, brought the art to its inevitable close. In spite of all the faults of their enamel system, and the qualities which distinguish the Dutch school of figure painting, the works of the two brothers Crabeth at Gouda have received much admiration; but whatever good they contain only deepens the regret at their rejection of the great qualities that had once distinguished the then declining art. One brother

[1] Gough's *Collection of Gloucestershire Papers*. Bodleian Library, Oxford, and *The Fairford Windows*, by Rev. T. G. Joyce, 1872. Van Dyck's father was a glass painter.

had worked for the church under its Roman Catholic masters, the other under the Protestants; and Adrian de Vriëe rivalled him in a work in the church at Gouda (then cathedral no more), composed with such freedom as the veriest pagan would have scarcely surpassed, in what has always since been known as "the liberty of conscience" window.

England suffered from the imported works of their followers, and of those of them who settled here. Van Linge came to England in the time of James I. He inherited a failing system, he brought bad principles, and he left bad precedents. His dense enamels are peeling off the glass: the result is offensive and irremediable; and those gloomy and inauspicious-looking saints, who darken the windows of the chapel of Lincoln's Inn, are the last shadows which collect about his expiring school. So much for the once-glowing and beautiful art in glass. Its days were numbered. There was, however, one man still, an Englishman of worthy fame, one Godfrey, whose works were much admired in France. But the spark could last no longer; and in spite of Sir James Thornhill's cartoons for William Price at Oxford, the genuine and graceful talent of Mrs. Pearson, and Sir Joshua Reynolds's designs for Thornton's window, of what Horace Walpole called "the washy virtues," the last glimmer of this art died away.

The habit adopted by glass painters, alike in all countries, of availing themselves occasionally of other men's designs, must not be understood as detracting from their merit; for such designs made independently of the knowledge of the peculiar exigencies of the art, could only be rendered into glass by an ability of artistic and technical character altogether special. In the rarest instance would the drawing completed by a sculptor or painter be possible in glass; its detail might be undesirable, its refinements impossible, its colouring unsuitable.

The art had a special skill and genius of its own, and on them depended the success, whether the conception of the subject or the drawing of it were the original work of the actual glass painter, or, as in Italy, by the distinguished men whose names have been mentioned; or, as more commonly the case in Germany, France, and England, by those wandering artists of many accomplishments who passed from abbey to abbey illuminating their books, painting their walls or designing for their windows, but whose names are lost to fame.

The relics of this art are but remnants of the works which ornamented the civic, palatial, and ecclesiastical buildings of the middle ages; and the words of lament used by the biographer of the Beato Giacomo may be well applied far and wide to countless other works than his, where he writes, "one grieves at the unhappy conditions of this art, of which the productions are allowed no hope of enduring life, where the work of long study and of infinite diligence is often in shortest time and for slightest cause destroyed." Such expressions may well expand upon a very wide horizon of regret in the thought of what those works contained; of how they pictured not only the incidents of well-known secular and sacred history, but illustrations also of such subjects of local and personal interest and traditions as once were familiar in the by-ways of a manuscript literature long since lost; of events and subjects which occupied the thoughts and conversation of the best and most intelligent men of their age, which made those simple paintings precious, but are now lost among the shadows of their common ruin. Beside all these there were also figured the memorials of national and religious customs, of civic ceremonials and domestic habits, of costumes, manners, trade, and war, the incidents of daily life, the condition of their arts, the architecture of

their streets, the decoration of their houses, and much else that brought to the memory true records of the past, rude perhaps in their representation, but touching by their simple familiarity—gems of art that have been left unheeded to perish with the annals they contained.

This art so captivated public taste in the middle ages as to affect the development of the great art which at first it pretended only to adorn; the architecture of that age so yielding to its charms as to expand itself purposely for their display. Thus the windows of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries increased in height and breadth; and in the fourteenth and fifteenth so universally did this fashion prevail that the constructive principles of buildings were affected by it, and all the weight of the groined roof and the arcades within, and of the spires and towers without, was left to rest on slender piers and flying buttresses, which alone remained for their support, the solid walls having given place to sheets of pictured glass.

The earliest form of this development was in the great wheel windows, commonly placed at the ends of transepts of important buildings, and occasionally at the west end, filling up the whole interior space beneath the groining. Among the earliest of these was the circular window of the north transept of Lincoln Cathedral, part of the work of the great St. Hugh, and dating from about or before A.D. 1200. The wide central quatrefoil and numerous circular openings in its pierced or plate tracery still contain their original glass: the general subject of the whole series being that of the Church triumphant, the outer circles containing at the top the figure of our Lord in majesty, seated on a rainbow; and in the others angels holding the instruments of the Passion, scenes from the general Resurrection, and single figures of

saints; and in the large central space is a representation of Paradise, with Christ seated among the blessed.

The excellent effect of these wheel windows induced their adoption by Gothic architects of all countries during this and the following centuries, and was probably, also, the origin of the development of ordinary window-heads to the entire space under the groining. Among the finest early specimens of this fashion are the windows of the Ste. Chapelle at Paris, the building of which was completed in 1248, and the greater part of which contain their original glass. The desire to obtain the greatest possible space for these openings is well illustrated by the east window of Gloucester Cathedral, where the walls of the most eastern bay are sloped outwards to obtain an extra space for the mouldings of the window frame, and thus to secure the entire width of the choir for the glass. This great window still contains its original glass, dating from about A.D. 1370, the parts repaired being supplied by old fragments from windows of the clerestory and Lady Chapel. The subjects painted are a series of single figures under canopies, with the group of the coronation of the blessed Virgin above them.

This architectural development led to changes in the artist's employment of the glass, and the greater liberty thus obtained affected the character of its painting and ornament. The improvement made in the production of the glass itself and in the chemicals of its colouring, and the advance in design and drawing, combined to enlarge the whole sphere of the subjects and treatment; so the artists, no longer confined by the comparative costliness of the materials and the small pieces which, in the earlier styles, they had to deal with, adopted a more ambitious course, and drawing more directly upon nature for their compositions, with freer minds and freer pencils, they de-

lighted the world with the enthusiasm of that mingled piety and genius that added living fire to the glory of their work.

But this liberty brought danger with it, as liberty always does where high principle is sapped by ambition. Their sphere enlarged, their knowledge and skill developed, exhibited themselves in the charm of individual expression. Their figures had more truth, their draperies more grace, their detail more exactness, their ornament more wealth; their compositions, enlarged in scale, looked no longer like a mosaic of transparent gems, but a picture and a representation that interpreted itself by the clearness of its pictorial composition, whether far or near, and thus, with a subtlety scarcely noticed by themselves, their work approached a naturalism and a pictorial reality that was at last the ruin of their art. It happily took centuries before that degradation brought it to its close. It had been by that thoroughly architectonic sense which prevailed in its earlier phases, and till the closing years of the fifteenth century, that this noble art, with all the dignified reserve of self-respect, had held its right place among its compeers; but as time advanced it happened with it, as with other things, that the idea of development became confounded with that of progress, and a system was introduced which delighted the unthinking popular sense with much that was admirable in the strictest sense of art, and glorious in effect, but with it also a loss of principle and a flattery of ambition that brought it to a lingering but certain fall.

No change more lamentable can overtake an art than that which tempts it to a sphere not properly its own. It is a fundamental principle in art that all its productions are subject to the restrictions which the nature of their materials and the nature of human

sight impose. We have now to do with an art which is especially connected with those of architecture and of picture—with the former as an adjunct and ornament, with the latter as a sister art of colour and design, but the nature of glass itself differs from anything else that these arts have to do with. Both these arts are based on definite principles and bound by definite limitations. Let a picture be black as night or fresh as morning, severe or sketchy, it will be good only if it have not transgressed the laws of chiaroscuro, of form and colour, and of linear and atmospheric perspective—all of which involve principles that are inviolable; and beyond them no good work of *picture painting* ever was or ever can be produced. They are the natural laws of the materials in relation to sight. The other art, architecture, whether classic, Gothic, modern, or aught else, has equally its laws and limits. It cannot without ruin trangress the powers of its own materials, nor can it, without offence, violate that science of numbers which we call proportion. Is, then, glass painting to be free of all control—the only art let loose in the vanity of unmitigated fancy?

Pictorial effect is a quality common to sculpture, picture, mosaic, and glass, though different in each. In the two first it is always regulated by the space it occupies. No figure-painter, no sculptor of alto or basso relievo, would so treat a subject, extending over a series of distinct spaces, as to ignore the forms of the architectural construction which bounded them. Each group would be complete; their connection would be made by the interest of their story. The metopes of the Parthenon, to a certain degree, illustrate this. It is much to be regretted that glass painters are impatient of this law, which binds all other arts. They also violate the very nature of their

own materials in the attempted pictorial effects of atmosphere. These are attainable only by modulation of colour and loss of outline; and neither of these are properly producible, for modulation is impossible where every piece of glass is of a different tint, and loss of outline is impossible where every piece is held in its place by a black frame of lead. It is answered that these effects are possible, and easily produced by painting in coloured enamels. Let the answer hold good; but we come then to the question of other limits—limits of the right and wrong of human labour, and limits of the duty to human sight. Excessive "finish" is not a necessary quality of high art; the highest art is that in which the greatest conception is the best expressed. The too high-wrought picture in glass condemns itself by the prodigality of human labour on a material so fragile that the least injury would mar it; and, if the artist were dead or distant, it would be irreparable. It condemns itself also by offering such work as no eye can rest upon to analyse without pain and fatigue. The fault of ambition lies in the pretension of an unjustifiable independence. If the glass painter be impatient of all limits, whether of architecture or of the special qualities of his own materials—limits, too, of the pleasure, power, or endurance of human sight and the use or abuse of his labour—let him throw up his art and take to canvas. Then he may labour without stint and satiate the eye without fatigue; but if he is to be a glass painter, let him honour his own art, and neither borrow the specialities nor wander into the province of another.

With respect to this beautiful art, I must venture to repeat what I have said of painting in other forms, that it is an insult to art that all its forms and phases should be forced into one groove or ground to one

level. A perfect work of art must be thought out in *its own language.* A picture-painter rarely designs well for glass, because he cannot think in glass, and he is often a bad judge of works in glass for the like reason—that he is always thinking in his own art-language, and mistakes for good what another art has borrowed and mimicked from his own. Hence it comes to pass that this beautiful art of glass painting is often misconceived both by artists and by the public. The art, with all its limitations, is large enough to open a field for ever to real genius. A man cannot draw too well for it, nor think too poetically; only let him remember *what* he has for the translation of his thoughts—glass, lead, and light.

The history of this art in England has as yet been but imperfectly written. There are materials for it, scattered and miscellaneous as they are, not for mere records and dry descriptions of the works themselves, most of which now lie in their ruins, sacred to the memory of the Reformation and the Protectorate, but rather for a book which would sketch the ins and outs of artistic life in England in the middle ages, its styles and schools, its connection with foreign countries, its patronage, its roving confraternities, and so forth. It might bring together in this way a mingled mass of anecdote, archæology, and memoir, which would fill very agreeably a gap that is still left open in English literature.

Some references have already been made to English glass painters. Of later ones, John Thornton, the "glazyer" of Coventry, was the most famous. He undertook the great east window of York Cathedral in 1405, and left a monument of genuine English work as fine as any foreign school of the age could produce, executed, as by the words of his contract he agreed, "to portray the said windows with his own hand, and

the histories, images, and other things to be painted in it." The subjects of his work range over a wide page of sacred writ. At the top is a small figure of Christ in majesty, with figures of saints and angels in the tracery below it; then subjects selected from the creation to the death of Absalom, and below them scenes from the book of the Revelation, and individual dignitaries of Church and State.

At a later date it became common for the "glaziers," *i.e.* the providers and painters of the glass, to be supplied with designs from other and sometimes foreign hands, as in the contract for the Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick with J. Prudde, glazier of Westminster, in which it is agreed that he "shall embellish matters, images, and stories that shall be delivered and appointed by the said executors by patterns in paper . . . to be pictured in rich colours at the charges of the said glazier."

Another similar contract for thus providing the design is authorised by the will of King Henry VII. for his chapel at Westminster, that "the stories, images," etc., for the window be "redily devised and in picture delivered to . . . the master of the works of Our said Chapel." One of the glaziers thus employed was a man who acquired well-merited fame, one Bernard Flower, who was also engaged in a contract for some of the windows of Henry VIII.'s Chapel at King's College, Cambridge. These were executed between the years 1526 and 1531 by contract with four "glaziers" living in Southwark, Middlesex, London, and Westminster, *i.e.* glass painters' establishments capable of furnishing the designs and executing those works, according to the words of the contract, in "suer and perfyte glasse and oryent colours and imagery of the story of the Olde Lawe and ye Newe Lawe;" and, further, to complete the windows of Bernard Flower, who had died; in all which the influence of various

schools and the work of many hands are easily traceable, both English and foreign.

But let us now turn to the practical phase of the subject—to glass painting as a means of artistic expression. Our lesson must be learnt from the successes and failures of former times; and it must not be forgotten that we have difficulties which at no other time were ever dreamt of. In former times Art flowed onward in one pleasant and continuous stream, but with us it is one continuous cataract. There are no quiet waters of comfort: the unhappy glass painter launched upon them may be a perfect master of his craft, but the public, with vulgar pertinacity, persist in steering him; one way he turns to please himself, one way to please his patrons; and if he does not altogether lose his self-possession in this vortex of contention and questionable taste, it is but to open his eyes on the Scylla of the classic school on one side, and the Gothic Charybdis on the other. Right principles alone can be the guiding light on his horizon.

But why speak of styles? There is a far greater matter than them—one which involves the whole future of glass painting—and that is the self-denying mastery which will recognise, and act upon the recognition, that glass painting is a special art, with its own laws, its own powers, its own limits; that the laws of picture have no more to do with it than those of sculpture have; that it is light that has to be dealt with, not shadow; translucent glass, not solid canvas; open air, not a picture-frame. If men set about glass painting, with some such spirit as this, they would find no difficulty about styles. We need talk no more of good or bad drawing—that phase is over; but the fight must now be for what people are not so ready to adopt, viz. the limitation of the art to its proper sphere. But it is immediately objected that this places a limit on the

development and excellence of art; though it is indeed the precise opposite of this. The range of the art of painting is not to be restricted. It would be so if it were to follow the same rules and principles, under all the various and even opposite circumstances in which it is placed. It is to save it from this restriction that glass should be recognised as imposing special obligations on the artist. Art will gain in dignity rather than suffer loss by this. Its powers and elasticity are at once recognised rather than confined. It is one thing in the picture which hangs over the altar, another thing on the broad expanse of frescoed wall, and another in the window, different (ever so different in each), but perfect in them all.

Why was it that such men as Lorenzo Ghiberti, Perugino, Perino del Vaga, Giovanni da Udine, needed to call to their country of the arts in their very halcyon days, the northern Jaques l'Allemand from Ulm, Livi from Lubec, and Guillaume from Verdun? Were not those giants of art able to manage painted windows? No, by their own confession, that art was a special one, not their own. It was not the mere glass that they wanted from the north; they had that glass already. The well-known French and German smalti were at their hand in universal use in Italy. What they needed, and what they sent for, were men who could *translate* their works *into* glass. There was the secret: there was the difficulty. The pencil of Ghiberti had known what to put on the cartoon, but it was the German-taught glass painter who knew how, and what of it to put *into* glass; and both were pleased with each other's works though both were different.

Let there be nothing, therefore, said about placing a limit on high art. Let us have no limit to the highest attainment of design; but let each office of the art be recognised in its place, and *there* perform its

duties. Let us have the picture, the fresco, and the window, each as beautiful as art can make them, in each case wrought on different principles, as beautiful as Perugino used to design them, or as the Beato Giacomo could translate them into glass.

There need then be no fear for it. As an art it would then stand firm on the sure ground of its own merits; and the artist, relieved from the trammels of other arts and systems, would revel freely in the glory of his glass.

ESSAY VIII

THE ADORNMENT OF SACRED BUILDINGS

PART I—PURPOSE—EARLY CHRISTIAN EXAMPLES—PORTRAITURE OF CHRIST—CRUCIFIXION

IT has always been under the quiet shade of religious contemplation that fine art has dedicated its loveliest conceptions to the ideal of the heart's worship. The light that gleamed in pagan faiths was but a ray still vibrating within them from the origin of all faiths in long anterior days. Imagination, crowded and disturbed by events and uncertainties, convictions and doubts, at one time darkened by the awe of Nature's mastery, at another inspired by the grandeur of her strange relationships of material and life, had raised up images rather of terror than of love, and had so clouded the pure ray of Deity that once had shone upon the dawn of human life, that there remained no more of it but superstitious reverence, and dreams of ideal powers haunting the empty places of heaven and earth. Hence the deep sadness that pervaded all pagan religions, which their mysteries only deepened, and their festivities, goaded by riot into artificial joy, failed to dispel. Still a ray of religious sense remained; and within all their apparent idolatry of material, their fears and hopes, and their conscious weakness, an intuitive trust bore testimony to the glimmering light

within them, that there was a Power supreme to whom their appeals for support and justice were not addressed in vain.

The relationship of national character to national religion has often been exhibited in greater force by its external expression than by the speciality of its faith; because the multitude having but little time and less ability to study and comprehend the subtleties of religion, has commonly fallen into a system, partly routine, partly superstitious; and by force of circumstances has satisfied itself with formalities, offerings, and sacrifices, as the material symbols of devotional expression. Individual religion may be very independent of externals; but a national religion has always needed a vast machinery of order both of things and persons; and whether Christian or Pagan, the national impulse has prevailed to dedicate the noblest and best that the nation could give, as the dignified accessories of its public worship.

In such places separated for devotion and consecrated by association with the highest purposes of human life, an artist may well pause before he puts his hands upon these walls and realise the duty and responsibility he undertakes; for his art, whatever it may be, is always prominent and must be effective in one or other direction for benefit or injury; from its very nature it must assert itself and be noticed; and whether in sculpture or in painting it cannot fail to affect the general sense of respect or contempt toward the place it occupies. He needs to realise the speciality of his position, that his art is an active present power, and for the future a living witness to generations of his fellow-men; and therefore that his work may so affect their mind that they may read at once the purposes to which it points apart from and beyond itself; and though the memory of it may grow vague, and the forms of its

sacred imagery may fade away, still that the thoughts which sprang from them may flow brightly to life's end, and cast a halo about their passing years.

The adornment of sacred buildings has been the expression of the universal religious sense of mankind. Under all varieties of belief and practice the temple has been regarded as the house of God. The pagan temple was the abode of the visible representative of some ideal deity, in the splendid figure worshipped in his honour. The Christian temple has been consecrated by the promised presence of God, and all that the arts could do has culminated there to testify to the faith in the eternal and unseen. In the pagan temple there might have been some restraint imposed upon the enrichment of the interior, lest by contrast the splendour of the idol figure might be diminished. The treatment of the Christian temple had no such impediment, but only that of the infirmity of religious expression; so in simplicity of spirit and acknowledged weakness, the highest and best of art that the place and age could produce has ever thus been lavished upon it. To the pagan the glorification of his temple was an inherited and immemorial tradition. To the Hebrew it had been a work of divine direction, and to the Christian the involuntary impulse of spiritual aspiration. The universal consent and demand for such treatment of their sacred buildings, whether pagan or Christian, came from human infirmity seeking aids to faith, by satisfying sense with the signs and symbols of things on which both memory and hope were centred. They sought those sacred shrines as generations before had sought them for the love of that sacred atmosphere which gave them rest. Association hallowed them, and it was their artist's privilege to indue their walls with pictured thoughts and memories which brought together the souls of those who worshipped there, and of those who had gone before.

But their endearment was their danger. Who would offend their household gods? Who of the ancients could divest their minds of the haunting visions of superstition, and what was that superstition but the vague reflex of awful truth? As in the physical constitution an accident of birth brings out the latent characteristics of the tribe, and witnesses to the race from which they sprang, by some startling evidence of what had been lost even to the vague memory of tradition; so in mind, occasional gleams reveal the latent truth long since forgotten, and a Plato among the Greeks or an Aurelius or a Cicero among the Romans, and others such as they, may reflect a ray from those distant springs of light long lost among the shadows of human life. But around even such minds as those comparative darkness reigned. Religion was not indeed to them, as to their compatriots, a mere political necessity; but devotion, another word for love, could find no place where no Person was, on whom to spend it. But in the depth of individual mind a latent power still held a partial sway, and though the accepted theology was monstrous, the reality of the unseen was a power beyond it, universal and irresistible; and the result was that tribute of mingled fear and hope which poor humanity gave, by the best of all it knew or had to give, and expressed its worship, too deep for common things, in the language and by the aid of genius.

But here was material again, and employed as a means of spiritual expression; for art, except in the words of poetry, has no other language, and there are those whose spiritual sense is keen and to whom material expresses no more than material, and is an offence. It was so in great degree with the first Christians. The works of classic genius around them, embodying ideals of religion, had reference both spiritual and sensual which they knew too well. Art,

sprung from the purest fountain of life, had been defiled. From its origin to its end, as presented in their age, it served fatuous idolatry alone, or grossest luxury. Its forms were an offence, so they hated rather than feared them. Their attitude toward the ideal of life was the absolute opposite of that of the pagan world. To them a Person engaged not their worship only but their affections. A visible reality at once human and divine had engaged them, at once too majestic and too tender, too holy and too pure for aught of material form to reach. But the need of it was too strong to last unsatisfied. The need of visible form to mark the spot or to secure the record of the blest departed, of the hope that had now changed to certainty, of the sorrow that was surpassed by joy for those who had "entered into life"; such need of record found its words in signs and symbols, some new, some old made new by change of sense, the dove, the olive branch, the anchor, and the palm, and thus their first germs of art found place among their silent cemeteries, where still they tell the story of their faith.

The form they took was such as all the influences around them would have led us to expect. The religions of paganism were written in their arts. The myths, which the finest arts of heathendom had embodied, were allegories of the deepest significance, and had often had their origin in the purest motive. The sculpture and painting of antiquity, from the very nature of their subjects (except such as were devoted to national history and portraiture), were inspired in the choice and treatment of all their subjects by that deep traditional poetry which underlay the relation of the outer to the inner life of men, of material to mind. The eyes and thoughts of multitudes, brought up in such cities as Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome, had been from childhood habituated to the influence of the

fine arts in their utmost perfection and power. The poetry, the allegory, the symbolism, which were the very life of those glorious works, then abounding all around them, were among the most powerful elements of an involuntary education for the inhabitants. The Christian converts had been as subject to those influences as any others. They had learnt to abhor the idolatry and to loathe the abuse of the arts, but it was impossible for them to change the habitual sentiment of allegory and symbol to which their minds had been inevitably trained. The doctrines and the rites of the new faith they had adopted were deeply figurative, and like the works of heathen sculpture to which they were accustomed, whatever was objective in them bore a recondite and spiritual interpretation. The earliest lessons of their faith had been conveyed in the allegorical form of parables. The miracles of its Founder had been shown by Him, as in the case of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, to possess a depth of meaning far beneath and beyond the external acts and objects themselves. The religious rites prescribed by Him were profoundly symbolical. The ancient scriptures, to which He had referred his disciples for the foundation of all He did and taught, embodied all their historical and prophetic reference to the new faith in the forms and words of allegory, type, and symbol.

Such concurrent influences, so numerous, so attractive, and so powerful, could produce but one result. The early art among the Christians followed naturally in the course thus prepared for it. The necessity for secrecy confirmed the use of it. It was easy to maintain, when clothed in symbol, what, openly exhibited, would be death. The mysteries of their faith gained force and value even to themselves when thus used. The poetry of art could symbolise them with more subtlety and refinement than any language. Hence

may in great degree be explained their early reconciliation to the employment of forms of art, and the subsequent and rapid development of its use without prejudice or fear.

If we look for the illustrations of it we must be contented with its ruins. At that period all art was in a failing condition. Great works of antiquity remained—but all practical art, in the second century of our era, had well-nigh ceased, except as a subject of display and luxury. Originality existed no more. The old forms and styles alone remained. The artist's profession could scarcely be followed by the Christians, for works of heathen sympathies were impossible, and their opportunities among their own community afforded them no means of livelihood. They possessed churches in the principal cities; but so long as their religion was periodically tolerated and proscribed, and themselves protected and persecuted by turns, they found nothing around them sufficiently stable to encourage any development of a new art on Christian principles. That was reserved for other days. Those early disciples, content to bear their changing fortunes, were content also to take and to utilise what they found about them, and they have left the history, not merely of themselves but of their faith, in the lineaments of a faltering art, weak at its outset, and weaker in its progress, but embodying, to the best of their power and of their poor opportunities, the testimony of their fortitude and devotion.

The vine, the lamb, the crown, the phœnix, and the peacock were to them symbols of the deepest interest; and the fish and the cross still more intimately told the story of their creed. To them it was but as yesterday that the great drama of their redemption had been acted out. But, as centuries elapsed, and the realities of that awful history receded farther and farther into the past,

a craving desire arose for anything that could restore to them the sense of its proximity, and fill, by some external and sensible expression, the void where memory or imagination failed. For this some consecutive composition was needed, and consistently with their tender choice of subjects, one of the earliest of them was the figure of the Good Shepherd. He is represented in many ways, sometimes in the attitude of walking, with a lamb across His shoulders; sometimes in repose, standing with His sheep about Him, some feeding, some gazing up at Him, or listening to His voice. Sometimes He carries the shepherd's crook, sometimes the pipe with seven tubes, and with all the signs of pastoral joy around Him, expressed in the simple landscape forms of flowers, trees, and singing birds. But this subject was not altogether new. The simplicity and grace of this easy composition had already made it a subject of classic art, but totally devoid of all such surrounding scenery and symbol, in the Hermes Criophoros, where the god was indeed no good shepherd, but the herald of the sacrifice of Arcadian tradition, carrying the ram upon his shoulders; or as the protector of Tanagra, carrying the ram round its walls to save the city from a pestilence. To the Christians it afforded at once the opportunity of a beautiful allegory suggested in their Master's own language; and thus consecrated to a new ideal, recomposed in features and embellished with deep significance, they painted it and sculptured it with untiring interest and variety. Thus, too, with most aspiring poetry they converted many a lurking memory of their former religion, and purified it in the brightness of their new faith. So the story of Cupid and Psyche, the personified emblems of love and the soul, was raised in the issue of its idea, to symbolise that love which had won for the soul its eternal life. Thus all that the

poetry and the innate yearning of the heathen world had testified to its unexpressed convictions, fell naturally to Christian use, and then lifted from the realm of dreams to the certainty of that faith which had interpreted them, they were at once adopted without change. Another significant subject adopted by them very early from classic art was that of Orpheus with his lyre, surrounded by the animals whom his music had tamed. In the early Christian's love of recondite and mystic symbolism this figure of Orpheus, who had descended into Hades, had achieved his purpose, and had returned alive, represented the risen Christ; and his lyre symbolised the music of the Gospel subduing the hearts of men.

But all the favourite subjects of the early Christians are known too well to be repeated here. The fondness for clothing abstract truths in allegory and emblem was fostered by every influence around them. It was a characteristic of their time. They had known it in the symbolism of Jewish rites, and in the prophetic language of the Old Testament, they found it in the parables and prophecies of their own Scriptures, they were accustomed to it in heathen art and poetry, and they read it in the language of the early fathers of the Church, whose allegorical and mystic interpretations fostered a similar spirit in their art.

Their works of art were acts of faith. They lost all thought of self in the glories of that faith for which they lived and died. The tombs of the martyrs became their altars, and the open halls in front of them their churches. Their pictures were not devised for luxury and ornament; but the more fertile a subject might be in its illustration of doctrine and belief, the more it was adopted. Hence the group of the Divine Infant and His mother expressive of the incarnation of the Son of God; of Abraham and Isaac carrying the

wood, as prophetically illustrative of the preordained sacrifice of the Crucifixion. With other meanings, Noah and his ark, episodes in the history of Jonah, the raising of Lazarus, the giving sight to the blind, making a series of subjects full of that fact and allegory combined, which gave them all their value, were painted on their walls and ceilings continually.

In the works of those early times—or rather in the spirit which inspired them—their poetry and their purpose were the germs out of which the religious art of Christendom has grown, but the style and character of their design waned away beneath that general influence of change which then prevailed. They have never been revived. It is perhaps possible to trace a distant likeness to them in the "classic" of a long subsequent age in the works of such men as Penturicchio, Botticelli, Perugino, and Piero di Cosimo, who lived in a time of classic revival, when every influence of learning, literature, art, and poetry tended to that result. But the likeness is only slight and transient. The spirits of those distant times, above a thousand years apart, may have had much sympathy, but the genius of each age and race of man was original. From the beginning art has ever been the fruitful exponent of its own age, locality, and purpose; and its varying styles have been no more than the varying fashions and dialects of its multiform and inexhaustible language.

Pagan Rome had but little originality in art. Her artists were mostly Greeks. Scarcely the name of one painter conspicuous in high art survives. Doubtless there were native artists, but it was to wandering companies of Greeks that Italy, especially in the south, was indebted for her fine arts; and to them we must attribute most of the works of the early Christians, long before that peculiar Greek type appears which was due to the Byzantine influence. The Early Christian Church

in Italy was very Greek." If we may trust so careful a historian as Dean Milman, we may accept at least as mainly true this passage, in which he described its early state: "Their language was Greek, their writers Greek, their Scriptures Greek; and many vestiges and traditions show that their Ritual and their Liturgy were Greek. Through Greek the communication between the Churches of Rome and of the West was kept up with the East." To this Professor Westcott adds, speaking of the early Church in Rome: "As far as we can learn, the mass of the poorer population, everywhere the great bulk of the early Christians, was Greek, either in descent or speech. Among the names of fifteen bishops of Rome, to the close of the second century, only four were Latin."

The age of early Christianity was that when the disruption of the old systems of the world had begun. The old classic style was fading away in its last weakness. The arts of the Catacombs, like those of Herculaneum and Pompeii, only served to reflect, like marred and broken mirrors, the traditions of the great arts of old. The genius and glory of the works of ancient days had waned away; and the echo of their distant voices were the only signs of life in the language of the arts which remained. The first Christian possessed, in the only artists he could command, but poor exponents of the ideas he desired to record. His artists were probably the poorest decorators of the day. Here and there a few fair works are found, but they are slight and sketchy, and mostly devoid of good drawing or composition, as might be expected from such workmen. But they are not to be condemned for that. The paintings of the Catacombs were done in the dark: the best light the artist could command was but the flare of the torch or flickering lamp beside him. Nor could they be better seen by those who came

there. A work of art is not good for its genius and its science alone. Human skill and time and labour have their intrinsic value. If those works were slight and rapid they were all that they needed to be—and so far good as fit for their place, and fit for the impressions and the scanty time of those who saw or cared for them.

Weak as those works were, their artistic value to us is very great. They preserve in their feeble lineaments and imperfect execution the character and technicality of the great times. Picture painting in the greatest days of ancient art was probably very different from what our eyes are accustomed to. Figure painting was as beautiful as the perfect taste and perfect models of ancient Greece could lead us to expect; but composition of figure subjects was probably more sculpturesque than picturesque. All scenic background was of the simplest kind; and when natural or architectural forms were introduced, they were devised less to complete a picture, as nowadays, with landscape and perspective, than to fill up by a few accentuated forms and lines the general composition of the subject. In ancient art the backgrounds were often plain monochrome, from which the figures, singly or in groups, stood out in clear relief, beautiful in their freedom from all unneeded accessories and all disturbance. Landscape painting, as we understand it now, was not appreciated. The trees and rocks and other forms of external nature represented in the backgrounds of pictures in Herculaneum, Pompeii, and the Catacombs are conventional in the extreme, and, from the universality of this treatment, we may fairly believe that these plain marks of style and character are the signs of what they had traditionally received from ancient times. Thus we may regard the classic art of Grecian painting—and of the Roman also, which

was but its echo—as rather based on the principles of architectural than of the more definitely pictorial art. Thus was the painting far more beautiful in its sculpturesque harmony with the architecture, whether it was executed on the walls themselves or in pictures hung upon them—far more beautiful indeed in the entire unity of the general effect than all the resources of linear and atmospheric perspective in modern art, which only too commonly belies and contradicts the architecture that it pretends to adorn.

Thus also in Christian art we often find both single and grouped figures left with only plain monotone backgrounds; and this even where natural objects form part of the illustration, as in such subjects as Moses striking the rock with the waters flowing out, or Jonah beneath his gourd, or cast into the sea, or restored to land with all the many accessories of such subjects, his companions, the ship, the waters, and the whale; or other compositions, equally involved, such as the sacrifice of Isaac; the baptism of Christ, or the sermon on the mount; or that beautifully-symbolic subject of the ship coming into safe harbour, with furling sails and cargo stored on deck, and a sure landing-place at hand, emblematic of the end of the storms of life, and the soul received into its rest at last. All these and many other subjects, which involved the necessary introduction of natural objects to explain them, are treated with all the traditional simplicity of ancient classic art. The love and the labour of the artist were thrown into the expression of his figures, and all else was omitted but a few conventional or emblematical accessories to explain his subject and to enhance its dramatic interest.

On these good and simple artistic principles all the painting of the early Christians is based. And although the style of art was entirely changed in after times, those principles remained inviolate until the science of

perspective and the new passion for realistic landscape painting at the close of the fourteenth century opened a new era in the theory and practice of fine art.

Thus is it with deepest interest that a Christian artist turns to the sources whence the arts have sprung, that from earliest days to his own have stamped on each age the unfailing evidences of its motives and its worth. He wanders among those illustrations of sacred story, a biblical cycle, composed with a manifest simplicity of purpose to satisfy the craving for expression, to record the truth and to teach it. But he had also read the written history of those times, and of the heroism of generations that surpassed romance in interest and pathos. The records of their history had described the storms of unpitying savagery that had swept around their lives, but all that art has engraved on their movements only commemorates their peace; if a cross is marked upon their grave it denotes not suffering but life; the dove and the olive only symbolise the purity and freshness of their faith, the anchor and the palm affirm their victory. A sense of the extreme sacredness associated with the history and doctrines of their faith was certainly one cause of that reserve which characterised the early Christian artists. No doubt the prevailing sentiment would have affected them which denounced the arts as only pandering to idolatry, and their own abhorrence of the prevailing sentiment and misuse of art, in an age of rapidly-deepening corruption, would have increased the intensity of that reserve; but the motives of caution and fear imposed a further and even stronger restraint upon the outward expression of their faith, too sacred for exposure to inevitable sacrilege, too pure and powerful to be borne by the pagan magistrate, whose hatred of it told the conscious shame of his own contrasted life, and whose fear alone, and not whose scorn, explained his

violence, leading them to the certainty of trouble or of death.

It might seem at first sight strange that, in spite of all such motives and restraints, the one subject in which art would have been most precious to them has been left without any faithful witness, the memorial of their Master's form or countenance. The mind of early Christendom had been so entirely concentrated on the character and Gospel of Christ that all material sense or memory of Him had been overwhelmed in the halo of His divinity. The pride and grandeur of external beauty with which the image gods of the heathen had been invested, and their divinity expressed, little accorded with the first Christian's ideal of his gentle and self-sacrificing Master. His belief in the awful majesty that was hidden in that figure overwhelmed his imagination. He approached its representation in fear, and took refuge in symbols. But to us who, at this distance of time, receive in one united sound the echoes of the many and various notes which directly or indirectly vibrate through the voices of tradition, it is natural and with some confidence of truth to suppose, that at that time when delineative and representative art was the common and facile practice of the age, there were, among the first followers of Christ, men whom both habit and ability would have induced to sketch or even to complete the memorial image of that Being who occupied their whole mind with a love and devotion that were the very first springs of their life. His countenance would haunt the memory of those who knew Him, and the imagination of those who had not seen Him but believed. No conversation among such disciples could have passed without some personal reference to their Master. The teaching of His doctrines would have involved anecdotes of Himself, His conduct, His manner, His appearance, and His voice;

and would have been like pictures to their hearers' minds; as riveting in interest to those who listened as to those, who, pouring out their stores of incident, told how He stood and wept before the grave of Lazarus, how His face was scarred and all the beauty they would have desired in Him was marred, as He sank beneath the weight of the cross; and with what smile of recognition He welcomed them in the haze of morning upon the shore of Tiberias, and invited them to "come and dine." Such tales were pictures, and His was their central figure. No words of His were repeated by those who had heard His voice but that His image was there before their mental sight, an indelible reality.

An old anecdote does but relate the event of many such probable occasions; how at the supper table in the house of Pudeus the conversation turned to the subject of our Lord's personal appearance, and St. Peter, yielding to the urgency of Sa. Prassede, drew an outline of his Master's head upon her napkin. The intensity of that deep and quiet enthusiasm that pervaded the heart of earliest Christendom was concentrated on the person of its Lord. His divinity was too awful for art to approach, but His presence was human. If His words were related, their occasions would have been told with the brightness of fresh memory; and thus the traditions of His appearance, which we still value, had their source at the stream's fountain-head. If those which art has embodied appear at first sight inconsistent, their uncertainty is easily dissipated if we recollect that not those who saw but only those who had heard about Him were the artists to whom we owe the few and faded memorials of His person. The stories of His lovely youth and of His wan maturity filled the anecdotes of His career; both equally true and penetrating, whether their words were inspired by the purity of His character or the pathos of His life.

The early dread of that idolatry round which the course of pagan life was plunged in vileness, may have restrained the artist's hand and the worshipper's desire; still, much that looks like mere symbolic reference may have been true to the life; and those figures of the young Christ that surprise us, are but the images which a consecrated tradition had left printed on their minds, as faithful in ideal portraiture as those lineaments of solemn beauty which mature Christendom has intuitively accepted as the truth. Those youthful heads which the first Christian sculptors and painters assigned to Christ wore the expressions of artistic poetry, based indeed upon truth, but inspired by their individual conceptions of a being whose life no age could affect; and whether as a child among the doctors in the Temple, or seated on His Throne with the arch of heaven beneath His feet, they portrayed him as the Lord of eternal youth.

Art has preserved no certain portraits of His maturer years; but although St. Augustine's assertion that no portrait of Him existed, may be true, and though the literature of the early fathers of the Church is troubled by the contending waves of controversy as to the divinity which illumined or the humanity which marred His countenance, still the golden thread of unanimous conviction has been woven without break through the tissue of contending thoughts; and whether as a head of solemn beauty such as once adorned the vault of the cemetery of St. Callixtus, or even those of late Byzantine feebleness, or such as Da Vinci painted it, from first to last, through phases of art which the events of centuries had modified and the varying tones of religious sentiment had changed, the same ideal can be traced throughout to an original of mingled gentleness and power, expressed by features of grave proportion, with the lips closed, the brow open, the cheek-

bones marked, the face long, and the parted hair undulating behind the shoulders, of a man whose true portraiture had been presented, never to the sight but only to the heart of humanity, on lines that none could draw but those inspired hands which pictured it in the lineaments of the written Gospel.

Still artists will have to do with that divine head of which Origen said that it had no certain aspect, but varied according to circumstances and the persons connected with them: and, indeed, experience since his time has shown how each artist, each nation, and each age has changed that aspect, although maintaining the general idea and proportions of the ancient type. They began by the attempt to glorify it according to classic models; in the troubles of a subsequent age they cast their own gloom over it, and in the days of ascetic discipline they marred it with the lines of agony and grief; but by none has that noble loving face been more degraded than by the degenerate schools of more modern times, which, taking refuge in the meekness and gentleness of Christ to screen the feebleness of their own conceptions, ignoring the grander elements of His character, His splendid independence, His boldness in denunciation, and, when needed, His ruthless severity, they picture him a mere creature of weak sentimentality, effeminate, inane.

Many pretended portraits of Christ, both in painting and sculpture, occasionally in statuettes of gold and silver, existed in the earliest times, but principally, if not altogether the work of, and possessed by the Gnostics. The only two statues of any importance of which early notices remain are the one erected by the Emperor Alexander Severus among his portrait sculpture of eminent persons, of which sufficient evidence as to the fact is preserved, but not as to the authenticity of the likeness. Of its fate there is no record, as there

is of the other, which was a bronze figure that the woman, healed of the issue of blood, is related to have raised as a memorial of devotion in her native city, Cæsarea Philippi, and to have been held sacred there for the miracles of healing produced by it, but which was destroyed through the animosity of Julian the apostate, and replaced by a statue of himself.

Of picture portraits, to which such sanctity is still attached as would be justifiable only on the certainty of their truth, the histories are utterly mythic. They are those associated with the stories of Agbarus, King of Edessa, and of Sa. Veronica. Of the former the story is preserved by Eusebius (A.D. 338), who, taking his information from the fragmentary writings of Julius Africanus of the third century, relates that King Agbarus, having heard of the miracles of Christ, sent a messenger to beg his cure. To this Christ sent a letter in reply through an apostle, by which his cure was conveyed. Eusebius makes no mention of a portrait on that occasion, but states that picture portraits of our Lord existed in his time, of which he affords no clue to their origin, but such had been long known and used as objects of worship by the Gnostics. The first notice, trustworthy as regards authorship, of any portrait at Edessa is in the *Ecclesiastical History* by Evagrius, who died at the close of the sixth century, and the first asserted eye-witness of it was a certain Leo of the Church of Constantinople, who stated before the second council of Nicæa (which had been summoned against the iconoclasts, A.D. 787) that he had seen at Edessa the portrait which Christ had sent of Himself to King Agbarus, and that it was venerated as an object of the utmost sanctity. About two centuries before that time the miraculous powers of this picture had been assured to the devout inhabitants of Edessa on the occasion of the siege of the city by the Persians

under Chosroes; for a tower of attack, principally composed of wood, had been raised outside to overtop the walls, and had defied the attempts of the defenders to burn it, till despair suggested their recourse to miraculous agency, and having placed the picture beneath the woodwork, the fire immediately took effect: the tower was burnt and the city saved. With equal fertility of devout invention the stories, resulting perhaps rather from pious imagination than from pious fraud, about the production of this sacred picture began to multiply, and at last became so confused with the story of Sa. Veronica as to need as much ingenuity to unravel them as they had needed credulity to originate. In the eighth century we are for the first time informed of the miraculous production of this picture, how that the king was as anxious for a portrait of Christ as for his cure, and had sent an artist to take it, but, baffled by the marvel of the divine countenance, the artist was consoled by the compassion of Christ, who pressed a part of His own dress upon His face, and sent the portrait thus produced to the king. Another story by the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (A.D. 959) relates that Christ consigned a portrait of Himself, produced in the same manner, to St. Thomas, who sent it after the Ascension to Edessa by the apostle Thaddeus. Thus the stories roll up into a romance, and the western development of that Eastern tale tells that it was neither the artist nor St. Thomas, but an enthusiastic woman, to whom the musical name of Veronica has been given, who obtained it from the "sacro volto" as Christ was sinking beneath His cross on the road to Calvary.

The subsequent history of these portraits is as great a curiosity of confusion as their origin. Edessa fell into the hands of the Mahomedans, and was retaken by the Greeks in the tenth century, when the alleged

portrait was found there, and being brought to Constantinople in 944, was deposited in the basilica of Sa. Sophia. The honour of having transported this picture to Rome, rescued from desecration by the Moslems, is claimed by the Venetians, and of their having presented it to the church of St. Sylvester; but there is no historic authority for the story. It is with more authority claimed by the Genoese, as having been presented by the Emperor John Paleologus to Lionardo Montaldi in 1384, and presented by him to the Armenian church of St. Bartholomew at Genoa. This was just 440 years since its transportation to Sa. Sophia, and in the meantime Constantinople had been sacked by the Turks, and all account of the picture had been lost.

The portrait in St. Peter's at Rome, described as that given by our Lord to Sa. Veronica, is without doubt a picture of great antiquity. In what way it reached Rome is not known. Among the strange traditions about it, one is, that it was brought there by Martha, the sister of Lazarus; but any definite date to which it can be traced, and that but vaguely, is not earlier than the beginning of the eighth century. It was preserved for a long time among the treasures of the church of St. Mary of the Martyrs (the Pantheon), and transferred thence by Pope Urban the Eighth (1623-1644) to the chapel now well known as that of Sa. Veronica under the dome of St. Peter's. The story of Veronica is a variation of that of the artist sent by Agbarus; and the idea of a woman being associated with the story at all, appears to have been developed by degrees from the tradition of that portrait being confused with the one attributed to the woman of Cæsarea Philippi, whose name, as perpetuated through Gnostic tradition, was Prounice, known subsequently, in the sixth century, as Beronice, by the change of the

allied initial, and thence by a similar change to V, developed into the half-Latin, half-Greek appellation, Vera-icon (true likeness), whence the well-known Veronica has been accepted, not indeed as a woman, but as the popular name for the likeness itself.

The vagueness of tradition, and the value of authorities on such subjects, is well illustrated by another portrait, of which there appears to be no intimation before the year 826,[1] as having been painted by the evangelist St. Luke, a story repeated by others of that age, and even mentioned with respect by such an one as St. Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1274). It was then in the chapel of the Santa Scala of the Lateran, and guaranteed by the authority of Pope Gregory IX. in 1234 by an inscription placed by his order beneath it: "Salvatoris nostri effigies à S. Luca depicta."

Such is the pious romance of the portraits of Christ, of which the alleged copies are equally ideal. The printed copies of that at Genoa are taken from a totally unauthenticated copy of an original which no one is allowed to examine. The printed copies of the Veronica picture at Rome are described on the best authority to be "pious souvenirs, but not an object of the least iconographic value."[2] Still the tradition remains as a haunting shadow which, through all the centuries, has pictured our Lord in His mature life with a coun-

[1] Michael, a Greek monk, in his biography of Theodorus Studites.

[2] M. Barbier de Montault, a learned antiquary, who, as a member of the Roman clergy, was admitted on a rare occasion to the exhibition of the picture of the volto sacro of Sa. Veronica, writes thus: "The holy face is enclosed in a silver gilt frame. A plate of metal covers the field up to the outline of the face. One is led to conjecture flowing hair reaching to the shoulders, a short beard bifurcated, and other features so vaguely indicated and so completely effaced that it requires the liveliest imagination in the world to perceive traces of eyes or nose. The place of the impression exhibited only a blackish surface, not giving evidence of human features. . . . The so-called facsimiles of the head are sold in the sacristy, but there is no guarantee that they resemble the original."—Quoted in the *Quarterly Review*, October 1867.

tenance of deep solemnity, power, and gentleness, suffering, resignation, and love; and for such combined expressions we may take with confidence the ideals which reverence may draw from those models which neither history nor art, but only the mystery of an inherited conviction, has authorised as the likeness of our Lord.

We may therefore wander freely and without offence among the thoughts and works of other times, and linger or turn aside, as our own sympathies may lean. We can fill up the sketchy art of the Catacombs with our own imaginings; we can interpret the severity of the Byzantine and the rude spirit of the Lombards by our knowledge of their genius and history. We can appreciate the intense poetry of the Gothic, and the matured art of the Renaissance, and satisfy our own individual conceptions from those inexhaustible fountains of religious idea. But had it been otherwise —had some veritable representation, or even some reliable type of the portrait of Christ existed, recorded in history and preserved to our time; had our eyes been trained to it from the first, and our affections filled with it, there would now remain no rest for us between the power of one artist, whose success would risk idolatry, and the incompetence of another, whose failure would offend our deepest sense with an insult akin to sacrilege.

By much the same mode of research we learn that no reminiscence has been preserved of the features of the blessed Virgin. St. Augustine writes plainly to that effect, "Neque novimus faciem Virginis Mariæ"—but others of his age, impelled by devotional imagination, wrote of her that her beauty was only equalled by the loveliness of her character. And thus with deepest reverence have all artists painted her from the simple figures of the Oranti in the Catacombs to the "Madonna di San

Sisto," when the Divine afflatus fired the pencil of Raphael. There are, however, two portraits on which some reliance can be placed, viz. those of St. Peter and St. Paul. With some allowance for varieties of style and date, the characteristics of those apostles have been preserved from very early times till now. We recognise St. Peter's head at once by the general compactness of the features, by the short and crisp hair and beard, and other well-known traits, to all of which those of St. Paul are in strong contrast, by the more flowing hair, the longer head, and the expression of countenance, indicating a higher origin and a finer mind. From early times there have been traditional portraits of St. Paul. Several early writers and Fathers of the Church have mentioned them—and of these, St. Ambrose and St. Chrysostom, more particularly referred to a portrait known by them, and accepted as authentic. There is not such particular evidence about St. Peter. St. Basil mentions portraits of apostles and martyrs generally as being known and received from Apostolic times; but with regard to St. Peter, for whose portrait, with that of St. Paul, any strong claim of authenticity is made, we can but feel that the unchanging type of head and features assigned to him from first to last suggests the confidence with which his likeness was received from earliest times, and allows a very fair presumption for its traditionary truth. The heads of these two apostles were constantly figured together. They are found so in the middle of the third century in etchings on gold of the ornamental glass cups and plates then very much in vogue. Occasionally they are represented standing opposite to each other, with a great cross between them; and sometimes only their busts are given. At a later date they stand right and left of the figure of Christ, and are found so in sculpture, painting, and mosaic.

The reverence which withheld the hands of the early Christians from the representation of their Master's person and led to the indirect use of symbolic figures in picturing the events of His life, prevailed with even greater force and persistency in relation to His death. The feeling of the artists even in the representation of such subjects as made his presence necessary, induced them to maintain the symbolic rather than the real expression of His acts; and for centuries after the introduction of His bodily form had been commonly accepted by all Christendom, still the symbols of the Lamb, the Cross, the Altar, and the Book as "the Word" of God were equally employed and approved as the reverential expression of more forcible appeal to each individual mind than what the weak tools of art could effect through direct representation. Thus till the sixth century realism and symbolism had continued side by side on all subjects but that of their Master's death. Upon that the vision only of devoted faith had been fixed; for no hand had dared to portray a subject surrounded with such awful mystery as the self-sacrifice of Christ—an event so stupendous as the crucifixion of the Son of God.

Such, however, would inevitably be introduced into the practice, as it had been shown symbolically in the purpose of an art which was not only useful for its witness to the faith, for its power of instruction, for the soothing comfort of its effects upon the contemplative spirit of religion, but, under many circumstances, for its absolute necessity. The intention, the history, the need of the world had been leading up to this great event. Suffering and death had been recognised throughout the existence of humanity as the only ultimate punishment for crime; and from the depth of time the conscience of mankind had accepted sacrifice as the only means of that atonement of reconciliation which

could obliterate evil. Whatever sacrifice men could make, the infirmity and inalienable corruption of their nature would mar the offering of the very best of them; but here was the sacrifice of the only faultless man, the central figure of the world's history. In its divine ideal it was impossible of representation; but imagination may be too much constrained. Human sense must be satisfied when its object may be gained without offence. Humanity had its entire part in that its central sacrifice; and for its sight it craved that which had been already pictured in its heart.

For above a thousand years among the numberless subjects which have covered the walls of sacred places the bare cross was still prominent. In the sacred solitudes of the Catacombs the crucified figure was not seen till for seven hundred years the cross alone had sufficed to fill the minds of Christian worshippers. To their accustomed eyes the cross personified their Master, and was itself an epitome of gospel story. If in the secret recesses of individual lives the craving for reality had allowed what no other eyes were to rest upon, and the figure of the Crucified was drawn, engraved, or set as a treasure of jewelry, an amulet or a memorial, such it was and no more. The unoccupied cross expressed the idea of Christendom as the symbol of victory. Its form was drawn upon the ground as the plan on which Constantine's great basilicas were built, the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople and of St. Peter's within and St. Paul's without the walls of Rome. Embossed with jewelry on solid gold, it was the chief ornament of the ceiling in his Imperial palace of the East. It filled the centre of the dome of the mausoleum of the Empress Placidia. In the baptistery of St. Pontianus at Rome it still stands above the pool of water, painted of large dimensions, rich with jewels, and richer still with its symbolism of sacrifice and life,

bearing on its cross-beam the two lighted candles with the Alpha and Omega suspended beneath them, in place of Him who in two natures was "the Light of the world," "the first and the last." Here the jewelled cross was itself the symbol of His precious death, and the fresh branches of leaves and flowers, which grew out all up its stem, as it rose from the water, were the symbols of His life. In the apse of St. Pudentiana the bare cross represents not suffering but victory over death and evil, as it rises above His enthroned figure with the emblems of the evangelists right and left. It personates Him in the scene of the transfiguration as it stands on the mount between Moses and Elias with the three disciples symbolised as sheep beneath it, over the altar of S. Apollinare in Classe at Ravenna. As late as the thirteenth century it was set in mosaic, as the great cross of baptism, in the apse of the Lateran basilica, where the stream of blessing poured from above issues from its base as a fountain of living water, and then separates into the four rivers of Paradise.

In less prominent forms but executed with the utmost care the bare cross was multiplied during the first five centuries, sometimes with a sacramental, sometimes with a personal reference, as it is seen taking the place of Christ's majesty, placed on a throne surrounded by the standing figures of the apostles, on the cupola of the baptistery at Ravenna; or, even in a more remarkable manner, occupying the place of honour on the wall above the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome, where in the centre above the subjects of the annunciation, the adoration of the Magi, and others, a throne, much in the form of an altar, is placed with the sacred roll of the Scriptures upon it, and a small black cross, crowned and covered with a veil standing upon it, representing the offering upon the altar, while a large cross rises up above it, richly

jewelled, reaching to the roof, the symbol of the sacrifice. In sculpture the cross is equally various and beautiful. On the front of the sarcophagus of Anicius Probus, Prætorian Prefect of the province of Italy in 395, a tall and youthful figure of Christ stands under the central arch supporting by His right hand an ornamented cross, of the same height as Himself, and with the left holding the roll of the Gospel. One other sculptured sarcophagus must not be passed without notice, because of the emphasis given to the crucifixion as *the one* subject *omitted* among the many relating to it. It is in the Lateran Museum, and dates about A.D. 400. The cross occupies the central position, with doves seated on the transverse beam, and its upper limb supporting the monogram XP enclosed within a wreath. Beneath it are seated two figures, and on the right and left are sculptured the groups of Christ held by a soldier before the judgment-seat; an attendant bringing the basin and water to Pilate, who is seated, with averted face, in doubt; balanced on the opposite side by the subjects of Christ bearing the cross and a soldier crowning Him with thorns,—in this case more like a wreath of leaves,—the central subject of the crucifixion being expressed only by its symbols. As the symbol of baptism, a tall cross is carved upon the font of the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna, where it stands supreme upon the globe (about A.D. 570).

As the prominent devotional ornament of a church, Paulinus, the Bishop of Nola, about 403, describes in one of his poetical epistles in honour of St. Felix, the way in which he combined the cross with the figure of the Lamb. He had covered the entrance through the cloisters to the church with pictures to tempt the people to come in, and other parts of the building with subjects from the Old Testament; but in the apse of the basilica at Fondi, above the altar, he represented

the Lamb with a crimson cross above it, about which he writes thus :—

"The work and wage of saints hold well together,
Steep though their cross, their prize is high—their crown
God's self—to us Lord both of cross and crown,
Midst heavenly groves of glorious Paradise.
In the white Lamb beneath a blood red cross,
Christ stands—the Lamb—the sinless victim doom'd
To undeserved death."[1]

The desire to realise the scene of the crucifixion, and yet the dread of exposing its suffering and shame, was exhibited in the ingenious expedients of its indirect representation, of which there is a beautiful illustration in a small work which has so nearly attained the complete subject of the crucifixion as to have represented the two thieves crucified right and left, with a *vacant cross* between them, the blessed Virgin being on one side and St. Peter holding his keys on the other, and below them the tomb with the two Maries approaching, and the angel watching beside it. At the top of the whole composition is the head of Christ glorified, with a cruciform nimbus, and the sun and moon on either side; but the one figure, the key to the whole, is omitted, and the cross, with two figures (Adam and Eve?) kneeling beside it, stands in the centre unoccupied—of living wood covered with its leaves.

This is the subject figured upon one of the metal flasks containing holy oil from the graves of the martyrs in the catacombs of Rome, which Gregory the Great presented in A.D. 604 to the Lombard Queen Thodolinda. The traditional account of these flasks, and

[1] Sanctorum labor et merces sibi rite cohærent,
Ardua crux pretiumque crucis sublime corona,
Ipse Deus, nobis princeps crucis atque corona,
Inter gloriferi cæleste nemus paradisi,
Sub cruce sanguineâ niveo stat Christus in agno,
Agnus ut innocua injusto datus hostia leto.
EPISTLE xxxii.

corroborated by the character of their art, is that they were brought to Rome from Jerusalem, where they had served to hold the oil for lamps in the holy places. They now belong to the treasury of the cathedral at Monza. On another of these flasks the crucifixion is represented by the figure of Christ in the attitude of crucifixion, and fully draped, but with no cross behind it.

But England is not wanting in works of this kind. The work may be rude, but the poetry of its intention is none the less for the roughness of its handling; and, indeed, if the place of England among early Christian nations is remembered, the struggle of the faith and the roughness of life, such works have an interest that so attracts our feeling to the poor uninstructed artist as to disarm all criticism of his handiwork, and to engage our sympathy toward the deep far-reaching idea in his mind—an idea loved and precious to him, vaguely conceived and realised only by an artless art, but precious to all time as an evidence of the pervading idea of Christendom to its most distant shores.

Perhaps the earliest objects of Christian representative art in England are the rude figures on the crosses, of which the ruins remain in some quiet churchyards up and down the country, and of which the models were evidently derived from those erected by the saintly Columba in the island of Iona. From about A.D. 580 he and his companions had spread Christianity in the north of England, and among the most eminent of them, St. Aidan from Iona, in 635 founded the monastery of Lindisfarne; and another, Diuma by name, who died in 659, was consecrated at Repton the first bishop of the Mid-Angles. With these men and those who came with them, the traditions of Christian art were brought to the heart of England. But art itself was non-existent there, and the earliest

attempts were the works of artless hands of men feeling after the means to realise the ideas which fascinated and occupied their imagination. We need not wander far south from that immediate neighbourhood to find illustrations of their works. At Wirkworth Church in Derbyshire, in the year 1820, a stone measuring 5 feet long by 2 feet 9 inches wide was turned up from the covering of a grave in the chancel, 2 feet below the floor, of which the side that had been reversed was found covered with elaborate sculpture. It was of the rudest kind. The design was divided into two series of subjects, one over the other, somewhat confused in arrangement, and leaving much, but plainly, to be interpreted. On the left at the top the subject is that of Christ stooping to wash the Apostles' feet. Next to them is a broad plain cross taking the whole height of the division, and with all four arms equal. In the centre of its flat unornamented surface is a small medallion, precisely where the medallion of Christ's portrait occurs in the great cross of the Transfiguration at Ravenna, and that of His baptism upon the cross of the Lateran at Rome; but here the medallion is occupied by the figure of a dead lamb. It is but poorly executed, but the whole idea is there. The little animal, with his head drooped in death and his legs crumpled together, was in the poor artist's mind the figure of the "Lamb as it had been slain." Thus the poorest art often contains the deepest poetry, and is often all the more effective from its pure and simple suggestiveness, incapable of realism. It cannot be told when this work was executed, but it must have been in Saxon times. The Norman conquerors had ruined all that they could reach that might remain to the glory of the vanquished; and this reversed and buried monument, without a name and without a record, tells the story of their reckless policy. To what purpose it

could have served can only be conjectured, for it might equally well have formed the side of a sarcophagus, or an altar frontal or a reredos.

Thus, and in countless other ways, the subject of the crucifixion was approached in northern and southern art as mingled fear and reverence surrounded and restrained it. To represent its reality was irksome and grievous, so the figure of the cross alone became the accepted symbol of the sacrifice, and the flowers and foliage springing from its stem were the symbols of the life which that sacrifice had won; or, if that would not suffice, the Lamb was drawn standing by the cross, or on Mount Calvary, bleeding from five wounds, or laid upon the altar, with the cross or monogram rising above it, or with the seven golden candlesticks or the four archangels grouped on either side. It was the favourite subject carved by rudest hands no less than the honoured subject chosen for works of the highest art that the time could produce, as we find it selected for the central medallion of the silver-gilt cross presented to the basilica of St. Peter at Rome by the Emperor Justin II. in the sixth century, where the figure of the Lamb, that by its nimbus is shown to personify Christ, is represented carrying the cross.

But sight craved for more: such art could not satisfy; the mere animal form of the Lamb could afford no expansiveness of expression, nor among the circumstances of the crucifixion could it take but an insufficient part, and arouse but a limited sympathy. Its effect was extremely various, for to some minds the strain of thought which symbolism demanded became wearisome, and the very symbol itself became at last repugnant; while to others the attributed sanctity of its associations aroused a devotion akin to idolatry. It was, therefore, at an age of

matured Christianity, in no spirit of irreverence, nor in want of adequate reason, that the Greek Council at Constantinople in 692 broke through the antipathy and dread that Christendom had hitherto felt to direct representation, and ordered that in place of these symbols, the figure of Christ should be represented.

There was good ground for the theory on which the judgment of that Council was based, for realism is the absolute opposite to that mysticism in which disordered imagination loses its way into the regions of idolatry. Every approach to realism in art is a step in the direction of that perfection which so absorbs all interest in itself as to allow no space nor spring for individual independence. The consummate art of Greek sculpture or of Raphael's painting seems to balk all further thought. Its interest or poetry of idea is concentrated within itself. The subject, the treatment, the expression are complete; they absorb all thought and master all imagination. If feeling is roused, it is within the limits of the subject itself; if devotional sense is touched, it is in sympathy alone with the artist's expression of it. But a vaguer art, symbolic and ideal, whether simply so or made so by consummate artifice, touches another chord in human nature, sets the heart free, and opens wide the springs of association—an art, apparently unconscious of itself, that all generations have loved for its pure and fresh suggestiveness; an art that had no power to satisfy, but set the mind pondering, far off in time and place, on the realities of the past and of the future, where the affections might rest or the imagination wander free.

It had been only through the excess of this ideal freedom that the pure purposes of early Christian art had been perverted; but now, in the fearlessness of direct representation, the way of art's advance was cleared, and though the figure of the symbolic "Lamb

as it had been slain" that antiquity had hallowed, and martyrs, saints, and generations of the faithful had looked upon and loved, had power still to appeal to all hearts by the touch of poetry, and of nature too, that it possessed, the more grave and great reality of Christ's own figure, slowly, but surely, gained that place which the enlarging sphere of art itself, and the expanding intelligence of more cultured life, demanded.

Still reverence stayed the artist's hand. The authority of the gospels that His garment and His vesture were taken from Him, confirmed by the common custom at Roman crucifixions, presented a reality too painful for representation. Pain and degradation might be thought of, but the higher ideal of dignity prevailed; and if the sacred body of the Son of God —that alone almost too awful for thought—was to be represented on the cross, it must be with reverence. So the figure was draped from the shoulders to the feet. The nude figure, clothed only with a short skirt about the loins, sketched as a caricature on the walls of the palace of the Cæsars, has been offered as a proof of the representation of this subject being practised by Christians in the second century; but the whole tone of early symbolism, the avoidance of the subject in all places where early art is extant, the marked omission of the figure even where the absence of it spoils a composition, the negative evidence of early literature in which the subject, in relation to the arts, finds no place, are a sufficient reply. The scene of a crucifixion was common at Rome at that time, and furnished the caricaturist with all he needed to throw scorn on those who were the Christians of Cæsar's household.

Archæology has been searched in vain to ascertain the earliest example of the crucifixion as a subject of wall painting. If any surmise might be

fairly made from the illustrations of it in smaller works, it must have had its earliest development in the Eastern rather than the Western Church. The approach to it appears to have been characterised by the reverential avoidance of the nude figure; but it is remarkable that the illustration, which bears evidence of being the earliest known extant specimen of it in painting, exhibits the figure *nude*, with the exception of a small loin cloth. The reason for this peculiarity, exceptional in the early practice, is interesting and explains the adoption of it in that particular instance and its prevalance in after ages.

The controversies relating to the person and nature of Christ greatly disturbed the peace of the Church at that time, from the fifth to the seventh centuries, and among the various parties into which the contending sects of Nestorians and Eutychians formed themselves was one which, from the desertion of its leaders, who joined the orthodox Church, called themselves "the akephaloi," headless. Against these, who had adopted the monophysite heresy, the monk Anastasius Sanaita, about A.D. 600, composed a written refutation, and to give force to his arguments, which, with their answers, have been preserved among his writings, he states that he drew a picture of the Crucified; and such was the successful employment of this illustration in the controversy, that he left at his death a request that whoever copied his MS. should also copy his picture. This was done, and led to the adoption of that particular form of the composition for its doctrinal value, and thus to the perpetuation of it to the present day, with such slight variation of detail only as style, country, or date may have suggested. The picture presents the crucifix alone, with the body rather standing than hanging from the cross, *uncovered*, except by a short skirt from the hips to above the knee-

caps. The head, with a rayed nimbus, declines to the right, its long hair falling down behind the shoulders; each foot being nailed to the support, and blood flowing from the five wounds.[1]

It has been already mentioned that although the Council at Constantinople in 692 had ordered the picturing of Christ's body on the cross, it had not actually originated that practice, for natural representations of the crucifixion were known previous to that time in miniature painting and in objects of private use. For instance, there is a small cross among the treasures of the cathedral at Monza which dates from a period above half a century before that Council; and by the account of it, which there is reason to accept as true, this precious object of devotion had belonged to Gregory the Great, who had sent to the Queen Theodolinda the flask of holy oil, and who subsequently sent this pectoral cross to her on the birth of her son Adulowald. The figure of Christ is here designed as standing on a suppedaneum, and nailed to an inlaid piece of the true cross, His body being draped from the neck to the feet, the arms and feet being left bare. The piece of the true cross is inlaid upon a small golden cross, ornamented with a beaded outline and with minute enamelled figures of the Virgin and St. John at the extremities of the cross bar, a rich nimbus round the head, and the sun and moon above the superscription.

But another illustration, half a century previous to the last, viz. in 586, is the earliest picture I am able to find of the entire subject of the crucifixion, with the associated persons and incidents complete. It is on the first page of a manuscript of the Gospels in the Laurentian library at Florence, which purports to be

[1] *Kunstgeschichte des Kreuzes.* Von Dr. J. Stockbauer, Schaffhausen, 1870, pages 163-4.

written at that date by one Rabula, a monk of Zaba in Messopotamia. Here also the figure of Christ is entirely draped, hanging upon a cross somewhat higher than those on each side, where hang the two thieves, their bodies being nude, with the exception of a very small loin cloth. The composition forms a complete picture, and in spite of infirmities of drawing it is full of expression, both in attitude and countenance. A small amount of sky only appearing at the top, with the disks of the sun and moon above the central cross, the groups of figures are relieved against a background of rugged mountain. To the right (*dexter*) of the cross Longinus, whose name is written above him in Greek, pierces Christ's side with a spear, and on the opposite side a figure draped in a long tunic, holding the "vessel full of vinegar" in his left hand, raises with the other the sponge upon a stalk of hyssop. Beneath this group three soldiers are gambling for the vesture, and groups of women standing on the extreme right and left complete the composition. Of these, only one has a nimbus, which at once designates her as the blessed Virgin, close to whom a figure (more probably that of the Magdalene than St. John) stands with her hand raised to her face in an attitude of grief; and on the opposite side the three women who had "followed Him from Galilee, and ministered to Him of their substance," balance the composition. Thus these two first forms of representing the figure crucified, as described above, and this picture of the scene of the crucifixion in a manuscript gospel of the year 586, seem to have been so completely conceived as to have formed the types from which these subjects have been repeated with but little variation till now—just 1300 years. They are both Greek.

The reverence, which such illustrations of the subject exhibit, was carried still farther by representing the figure of Christ as the Lord of Life, *standing before*

the cross crowned. The famous crucifix at Lucca is perhaps the earliest extant example of this treatment. The figure is of cedar wood, and by its style it is evidently of oriental origin. It is clothed in a rich garment of gold damask, reaching to the feet. The legs were also clothed and the feet covered with silver shoes, and beneath them is placed the sacramental chalice. Though the age of this work cannot be definitely fixed, the date of the sixth century, which has been assigned to it, may be true. It was brought to Lucca in 782.[1] The expression of similar reverence

[1] As a result of accident, credulity, and imposture, many works of art have been attributed to St. Luke, but totally without historical authority. It is hardly necessary to refer to the extreme improbability of St. Luke being an artist as well as physician, from the antipathy to all artistic representation in which as a Jew he had been brought up, an antipathy inherited by all the early Christians. The earliest date at which he is represented as a painter is at the close of the tenth century in the illuminations of the *Menologion* of Basil II., where he is drawn at his easel engaged upon a portrait of the blessed Virgin. Bologna possesses one such portrait attributed to him, of which Masius in *Bologna perlustrata*, gives an account, that it was brought to Bologna in the latter half of the twelfth century, having been found at Jerusalem by Eudosia, wife of Theodosius the Younger (408-450), and sent by her to her sister Pulcheria at Constantinople, where after its miraculous preservation from fire, it was kept in Sa. Sophia; but there is no historical reference to St. Luke at that time; indeed I find no notice of him as a painter before the sixth century. In the *Dict. of Christ. Antiq.*, page 878, is a reference to a writer about A.D. 518, which I have not the opportunity to verify, who mentions this same picture. It appears to be the earliest reference to him as an artist. The author was Theodorus the Lector of Constantinople, whose original work is lost, and only known by its relics or excerpts quoted in Nicephorus's *Ecclesiastical History*. These extracts treat of church history, and particularly of works of art at Constantinople; and by events to which he refers the earliest date to which his writings can be assigned is to the reign of Justin I. (518-527), or for good reasons more probably above 200 years later. The tale about Eudosia's picture by St. Luke was but an anecdote for which he offers no authority. Nicephorus, through whom we have the quotation, died about A.D. 1470. So there was ample time for any development. The first person who mentions this Theodorus Lector is St. John Damascene, who died about A.D. 758, whose predilections on such subjects are well known. The portrait of Christ by St. Luke, set up in the Vatican by Pope Gregory IX. in 1234, illustrates the confidence with which St. Luke's artistic productions were received in the early middle ages. The jealousy of cities and religious establishments led to the miraculous multiplication of these portraits, as was subsequently the case

is found in painting in a manuscript of the Gospels belonging to the nunnery of Niedermunster, at Regensburg, of the earliest years of the eleventh century,

with that of Sa. Veronica; and any mysterious-looking Byzantine picture at Rome or elsewhere, of which no one knew the origin, was conveniently attributed to St. Luke.

The figure at Lucca, which came to be known as the "Volto Santo di Lucca," was brought there in 782, at that time not assigned to St. Luke but to Nicodemus. The confusion between the name of the place and that of the evangelist is the only assignable reason for its fame as the work of St. Luke. A simple transposition of a letter might equally account for its attribution to Nicodemus: for the figure is one of Eastern origin, and may have very possibly been brought from the East soon after its rescue from the emissaries of Leo the Iconoclast, about A.D. 730, and have been introduced, at its last resting-place, Lucca, as the "Sacro Volto di Nicodemia" (for Nicomedia, one of the most important and wealthy Christian cities of the East), and as the geographical knowledge of the inhabitants of Lucca was *nil*, the word would have been at once associated with the only name that every one did know, viz. Nicodemus. This figure had also been confounded with a wonder-working image at Baryta, afterwards brought to Constantinople, but *at that time* associated neither with Nicodemus nor St. Luke. It was subsequent to the fame attained by this "Volto Santo" at Lucca that St. Luke became generally regarded as an artist. It was to the interest of the supporters of the Second Council of Nicea, A.D. 787, that he should be so. But nothing can be too wonderful for tradition on such subjects. Manni, in his *Lezione del vero Luca Santo*, illustrates their absurdity by quoting an author who describes a picture of the Virgin, painted on wood by St. Luke, that was brought to Rome by St. Peter and presented by him to St. Romolo. Another solemnly asserts that it was Martha the sister of Lazarus who brought to Rome a portrait of Christ. He further illustrates the confusion of names and authorities in the middle ages, by referring to a work published at Florence in 1441, dedicated to "St. John, Baptist, Apostle, and Evangelist," and to the same effect he quotes the *Capitoli* of the Academy of St. Luke the Evangelist, in which the saint is called "Apostolo."

After the fame of the Lucca crucifix, confused with the name of St. Luke, had originated the fashion of attributing many works to that saint, the monk Niceforus Calistus, writing in the fourteenth century an account of the church of the company of Nostra Donna dell' Impruneta at Florence, states that that (then famous) picture was painted by St. Luke—"Christi matris imaginem *Apostolus* Lucas suis ipse manibus depinxit," etc. This was an evident confusion of names derived from that of a certain Luca, a man of such saintly life in Florence in the eleventh century as to have been styled Luca Santo. He was an artist, and had been employed by the founders of a Romitorio (an establishment of recluses) in 1097. The church of the "Impruneta" existed at that time, and its famous picture is attributable to this Luca Santo. But so completely had the name of the evangelist taken his place that the Government authorities of Florence in 1385, writing to Pope Urban VI., vindicated the authority of this picture

which represents Christ standing before the cross, *crowned, draped,* and with a crossed nimbus about his head. He looks downward to a female figure standing beside the cross, with her hands raised as in adoration, wearing a crown with a small cross above it, who, by the word VITA written beside her, is evidently intended to impersonate redeemed life. On the opposite side is the male figure of MORS, death, in the attitude of falling, and holding a broken spear which wounds his head. There is a beautiful illustration of this tribute of honour to the crucified Saviour in a wall-painting of the middle of the thirteenth century, in the church of St. Sylvestro at Rome, which presents a very complete picture, with the two thieves crucified, and Longinus with his spear on one side and Stephaton with the sponge of vinegar on the other; but the specially original feature of the scene is the figure of an angel hovering above the cross, placing with the right hand a royal crown on the Saviour's head, and with the left carrying away the crown of thorns.

Among the number of invaluable works of early and mediæval art, of which all vestiges have been lost by the destruction of the original basilica of St. Peter at Rome, were two important pictures of this subject in mosaic. They were executed by direction of Pope John VII. in the year 706, and had they existed till now they would have been unique among Christian mosaics as specimens of the earliest pictures of the crucifixion publicly exhibited at Rome, important in the dimensions and the completeness of their design. They ornamented the space above the entrance, and

as one by "St. Luca, Apostolo." *Vide* also Manni "del errore che persiste di attribuirsi le pitture al Santo Evangelista." He quotes Padre Landucci on the subject of many pictures of the blessed Virgin painted by St. Luke, on the authority that "in the year 359 the dead body of St. Luke was discovered, and that at the head of the grave was found a portrait of the Virgin," but the author wisely abstains from stating *where* this occurred!

on one of the interior walls of a chapel dedicated by him to the blessed Virgin. The exterior mosaic was the more complete, exhibiting the crucified figure *clothed in a long tunic* to the feet, and, though pierced by the spear, alive, with open eyes and without trace of suffering—in quiet dignity, as though triumphant over death even upon the cross. The figures of the sponge-bearer, His mother, and the faithful disciple stood beside Him. The other picture, within the chapel, presented a similar figure of the living Christ, also clothed to the feet, with angels on each side in attitudes of adoration, the sun and moon being shown above, and the figures of His mother and St. John standing below.[1]

These few examples are enough at least to illustrate the tone of feeling with which such subjects were then approached. It was an age perhaps justly charged with ignorance and superstition, its misfortune rather than its fault, but holding firmly to a genuine faith in the realities of those great truths which art was thus employed to teach; and worthy at least of our reverence and regard for that spiritual ideal which it possessed, but which our own age wants, an ideal as precious as it is rare.

To refill the void, which accident and the frailty of materials have caused, the sole resource open to us is to recreate in imagination the great works with which the walls of sacred buildings were once covered, by picturing them as in character and composition similar to those smaller works which to our day have been preserved in sculpture or among the pages of illumination, or treasured in the forms of enamel or jewelry. The painting of the crucifixion upon a wall, which claims the earliest date, is the one mentioned in the writings of St. Gregory of Tours, about A.D. 600, in the cathe-

[1] *Vide* Ciampini, *De Sacris Ædificiis.* Tav. xxiii.

dral of Narbonne. It has long since perished. In that picture the figure of Christ was nude; and by the same authority the story is preserved that the exposure of the sacred body so distressed the good bishop of that See, that by his direction a curtain was kept drawn before it. Another early wall painting of the crucifixion is that in the Julian catacomb at Rome, in all probability of the eighth or ninth century, in which our Lord stands before the cross upon a suppedaneum, with both hands nailed, and clothed from the neck to the feet in a long white robe. It is composed, as very many have been since, with the cross measuring the main height and breadth of the picture, and with none but the figures of the blessed Virgin and St. John beside it. Our Lord is alive, and in perfect repose. He bows His head and looks down upon His mother as though addressing to her the words, "Woman, behold thy son."

Thus, in all the works of whatever kind representing this subject, it is worthy of remark, that till the close of the first 1000 years of the era, with rarest exception, the figure of Christ is represented alive, and not till the eleventh century were developed the types of suffering and death.

It is a common remark that the character of an age is illustrated by its arts; and it would be strange if it were not so, for art is no more nor less than a mode of expressing human feeling; it is as a tool in a man's hand, and as the heart is that guides that hand, so will the art be. Those centuries were saddened by violence and barbarism, and art only repeated the sense of oppression which characterised them. Refuge and relief were sought in monastic seclusion, but the discipline of the cloister only too often consummated the sadness which prevailed in the world outside. When life awoke in the following age, the inherited asceticism

still swayed the minds of the church's most devoted sons, and turned the course of their spiritual life into an enthusiasm of suffering. Thus art was still veiled in sadness, and the central figure of all its interest was exhibited scored with pain, wearied, wan and dead. And the spirit of sadness has pervaded the arts of religious expression ever since; but as the day of trouble cleared, art cleared too, still often sad, as reminiscence might well make it, but turning sadness into poetry, making suffering heroic and pathos sublime.

But such result was not attained at once, nor indeed has it at any time been attained but by few. In that age the ideal of suffering had mastered the mind of art. Self-imposed suffering had become the accepted sign of sanctity; for the Master was the great example; and from this an ideal was formed of human life associated with Deity, against which art had for centuries struggled by recourse to symbol and emblem; but, having once succumbed, it was held spell-bound; and Christ no more the spotless Lamb with the rivers of Paradise breaking forth from beneath His feet, no more as the Lord of life in triumph over the Cross before which He stood habited as King, and crowned as Supreme,—His precious death was pictured not as rest but agony.

To attain the higher ideal it needed conditions which that age had neither the sensibility to feel nor the power to express. Art had fallen everywhere. In the north, what little remained from the influence of such feeble art as Roman conquerors had introduced had been lost in the succeeding barbarism. The dignity that had first been acquired from classic models, and in the days of its decline had imparted a charm of reserve and repose to Byzantine art, had now degenerated into stiffness; and the dramatic action of Italian art had fallen into imbecility. Beauty was impossible

to either. The crucifix was the symbol of a grievous penance; the attitude of the Crucified was of one bent in pain and debased in helplessness. The great artists of the first renaissance, such as Giunta of Pisa, Margaritone of Arezzo, Guido of Siena, Cimabue of Florence, set painful examples. Through all the phases of Gothic painting and sculpture in Europe at that age, the Saviour was known only as the Man of Sorrows, wounded, dead. It needed the devotional sense of the Umbrian school to mitigate the exhibition of pain, and the piety of Giovanni da Fiesole to present the Lord in quietude upon the cross.

The artists who had treated the subject till the eleventh century had represented it with dignified reverence, and had done their best to relieve it of all pain but such as was inevitable to it. They pictured the Crucified alive, calm and painless; and maintained the tradition of the sacred words that "His mother was *standing* by His cross," as they painted her sometimes, motionless, in silent grief, sometimes with arms stretched out, or hands and head raised towards Him, as though listening to His last words. St. John too was standing there with equal calmness contemplating his dying Master.

But art became confused and depressed, and another ideal was adopted, which spread far and wide. With the Italians it had declined altogether, and north of the Alps it hardly existed. The Greeks who had been invited in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to Venice and Florence, the native painters who had risen in Pisa, Lucca, Siena, and Arezzo, had spread their influence in the south; and the pilgrims from afar had carried home tales of wonder, and spread their reminiscences among the artists of the north. The pictures of these Greeks and their Italian pupils were composed sometimes with the isolated figure alone,

sometimes with small panels filling up the intervals afforded by the arms of the cross, and painted with incidents from our Lord's life. The figure itself was often colossal, and always painful, emaciated and distorted in form, livid and unnatural in colour. It could only repel the sight and harass the thought, in the attempt to show what load of suffering, for what mass of sin, as that of the whole world, was needed for its redemption. It was the result of a morbid state of religious life. Whether from the roughness of the times, or the false ideal of terror as the only element of power to affect the rudeness of the public mind, the true idea of the crucifixion was missed or ignored. A finer sense could alone conceive and portray the beauty of self-devotion, in a sacrifice self-imposed, a death accepted as the only mode of sacrifice, irrespective of its terror or its pain; the fulfilment of the mystery of reconciliation, by the wrong done by death to a perfectly just Man, to balance the wrong done by sin to a perfectly just God; and thus in the person of Christ, as between God and man, to redress the equipoise of perfect justice. Such a conception of love as of one who had "laid down His life for His friends," who accepted the conditions with a perfect obedience less perfectly illustrated in the sufferings of His death than in the dignity of His resignation,—was an ideal, if not beyond the apprehension, at least beyond the expression of the artists of those days.

There was but little joy and less consolation to be got from such art as theirs. Their feeling was sincere, but their art was constrained; for their age was in the throes of troublous uncertainty, hardness, and contest, and they spoke its sentiment. But the eyes of worshippers grew weary and longed for other things; their faith had hope in it, and they looked for that to meet their eyes that would reflect the hope they felt. It is

therefore easy to conceive how welcome was the change from those lifeless, severe, forbidding forms, which presented to them only their Redeemer's agony, to bleed the heart in scathing penance rather than tell how their "sorrow and sighing should flee away,"—how welcome was the relief in that full flow of life and warmth of human sympathy, which glowed in the works of the youthful Giotto. He brought to them a pure and nature-loving genius, fresh as the air of his native Apennines, and rich in variety as the flowery vale he had adopted as his home. As with those who had gone before him, the subject for which all eyes looked was Christ upon the cross; and it was to his higher sense of the dignity and pathos of that scene that are due those elements of natural emotion, of dramatic interest and devotional expression that he realised in his works, which opened the way to all succeeding artists to delineate, in such variety of suffering or resignation, sorrow or rest, as might most deeply touch the heart of each one of them, the awful scene of that central tragedy of the world. Giotto was still young when he painted it on the sacred walls of Assisi. The figure of the Crucified as he there painted it is dead, but no more in the attitude of distorting agony. Suffering and sorrow have indeed left their marks upon it, but rather by that self-imposed sacrifice to engage the adoration of His love than to strike with awe by the exhibition of His pain. His mother had stood beside His cross, and had heard His last words to her; but "a sword had pierced through her heart also," and she has fallen fainting in the arms of her friends. The other Maries, and those whom the gospel story had described, are there; and, as if prefiguring those who were to take up the cross and follow Him, St. Francis and the brothers of his order stand there, also His faithful witnesses, and angels hover above in attitudes of grief.

Young Giotto's art was still imperfect; the traditions of the school in which he had been trained were not to be dispelled at once, but his great soul had found the true means of its expression; his genius had restored life to art and had set it free.

If at this period we look for the great exemplars in the countries of the south and east, it is inevitable, for north European art was then but just settling from its first enthusiasm into definite systems of native and independent growth, and had but just laid the first lines on which the beauty of its maturity was to be drawn. In the east there still lived the tradition of great days, but in low estate. Its technical knowledge was invaluable, and had been eagerly sought and studied as the foundation on which art in many parts of Europe had received the first elements of its education. But a more living art now bloomed in Italy, and it is there that we must look in this age for its finest models.

From that great fresco in the lower church at Assisi, every variety in the treatment of its subject has been developed, as the feeling of each artist conceived it, between the extremes of conventionality and realism. There are two great wall paintings which may suffice to illustrate this, the one devotional by Beato da Fiesole, the other dramatic by Tintoretto.

On the wall of the chapter room of St. Mark's at Florence, Angelico has presented the subject as one of ideal devotion in a painting of large dimension with figures life-size. The three crucified figures are there high above the company of kneeling and adoring saints, a scene wholly conventional, and without regard to time or place. Christ hangs in peace upon the cross; His head, wearing the crown of thorns, bends slightly down, asleep in death. All pain has ceased. He has "given his life for the world," and "It is finished."

The only historic incident introduced is the group

of his fainting mother, supported on one side, as she falls, by her sister Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and on the other by St. John. The Magdalene kneels in front of her and clasps her in her arms. Beside them the Baptist stands with the usual cross of reeds in his hand, and St. Mark kneels in front of him supporting the open volume of his Gospel on his knee. All the other figures are those of the doctors and saints of the early and mediæval Church. In the place of honour, kneeling close below the cross, is St. Dominic, the founder of the order, with head thrown back, directing his eyes upward, and holding out both arms in an attitude of rapt adoration; St. Ambrose stands behind him pointing to the cross, and, slightly turned, looks down toward St. Jerome, who kneels with hands clasped in prayer. With equally expressed devotion and in great variety of attitude a crowd of other saintly men, some stand, some kneel, among whom the more prominent are St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Benedict and St. Francis of Assisi bending forward as he kneels in the intensity of his devotion, engrossed in the contemplation of the cross, his refined face in profile expressing that combination of enthusiasm and humility which characterised his life. On the opposite side St. Laurence and two others complete the saintly company. It is a scene of exquisite tranquillity, with its many figures in action and yet at rest, independent yet united in the one absorbing idea of the adoration of the Redeemer.

It might be easily conceived how different would be the conceptions of two such minds as those of Beato Angelico, trained to the purest spiritual aspirations in the quiet contemplative life of the cloister, and of Tintoretto, the brilliant genius brought up and mingling daily in the busy turmoil of Venetian society, in an age and in a place where civilisation had lost its moral

and religion its spirituality. And indeed no contrast could be greater than their ideals of this great subject. Tintoretto has produced a stupendous work,—a scene of awful agony. With fine dramatic effect he has hidden the countenance of Christ in shadow, as the head crowned with thorns droops forward in death. The figure is grandly quiet upon the only upright cross; and the halo of pallid light, which envelops it above, gleams weirdly in that scene of gloom. It is a vast picture, with numerous figures scattered over it, some interested, but the most part indifferent; the soldiers at the entrance of a small cavern in the foreground are casting dice for the sacred vesture; and implements of agony, the axe, the hammer, the saw and the pegs with which the crosses are fixed in the ground, lie about in painful reality. There is no sympathy round the cross. St. John and St. Joseph have left it, and the holy women are grouped upon the ground fainting in despair. On each side the executioners are crucifying the thieves, as they lie stretched and struggling on their crosses upon the ground,—a scene of stupendous horror.

It is with infinite relief one turns to contemplate another and very different phase of the subject, and one of exceeding beauty.

Since that age of sadness in the tenth and eleventh centuries the figure of Christ alive upon the cross is seen but rarely. Throughout northern art in every form in which the crucifixion was multiplied, on walls, in sculpture or in glass painting, the ideal was ever that of the precious death. In southern art the same sentiment prevailed, but with some beautiful exceptions. The creative genius of the first renaissance of the arts in Italy, Nicholas of Pisa, in the thirteenth century, in carving a panel for the pulpit in the baptistery of his city, represented the Crucified by such a figure as till

then had not been seen. Reverently did the artist's hand strike from the marble the ideal of his Redeemer. Calm and dignified in attitude, without sign of pain, Christ looks down with half-closed eyes upon His followers who crowd toward Him. His mother has fallen backwards into the arms of her friends, and St. John, in front of her, stands close to the cross, looking upward, as though silently listening to the message which committed her to his care. On the opposite side, the sinister side, all are Jews; and of these, a scowling Pharisee and a priest pointing upward in contempt stand forward from the rest, while the multitude behind them express the mingled sentiments of those who had raised the cry to crucify Him, and of those who now awe-struck looked upon Him and would smite their breasts and return.

In later art it would be hard to find a grander example suggestive of accompanying events or of greater intensity of feeling, all concentrated in the representation of a single figure, than in that of the crucifixion by Guido at Modena. The solitary figure is alive, but just about to die; in pain, indeed, but beautiful, looking upward in utter resignation, as if the last words had just died upon His lips, "Father, into Thy hand I commend my spirit," as the darkness settles around Him, and the storm of wind, indicative of the earthquake, agitates his drapery.

The last I will mention is a work of Michael Angelo. There is no known picture or sculpture of the complete subject of the crucifixion by him; but among his drawings in the British Museum there is one that was evidently a design for a great altar-piece in basso relievo. It was never executed, but had it been so, it would have been, if not one of the most powerful, certainly among the most beautiful of his works. It is in red chalk, sketchy and incomplete, only the three

crucified figures being finished, the rest but slightly indicated, but the whole composition is suggested and the whole story told. If ever with so few lines the intensest feeling of this awful scene of solemn grief and troublous confusion was expressed it is here. The crosses rise very high above the figures around them. Men are still engaged, one on the top, another upon a ladder at the foot of the central cross. The figure of our Lord is beautiful; stretched with its arms raised upward on a Y-shaped cross, painless, motionless, exquisitely patient. The head is slightly drooped in shadow, as though its mingled love and grief were too intense to be gazed into; and so turned toward the left that only the profile is seen, but still looking upward as he appeals to heaven, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." There are many figures stretched below, some in grief holding up their arms to Him, some grouped round His mother, who has sunk fainting to the ground. It is the picture of a tragedy indeed, for what else could it be? but composed with such reverence, and expressed with such intensity of mingled tenderness and power, as to engage the deepest sympathy, and arouse ideas that will not be forgotten.

Sacred imagery is precious to those who can respond to it; an aid to the weak, a delight to the strong, a store unfailing for art to use, to adorn not walls alone but minds, with thoughts of what is highest, noblest, loveliest that the blessed God had spread along the path of life, to lead them upward to Himself.

ESSAY VIII—*Continued*

THE ADORNMENT OF SACRED BUILDINGS

PART II—EMBLEMATIC FIGURES—STYLE—MOTIVE

THAT passing sketch of the greatest motives on which Christian art has been engaged, may be enough at least to show how it is the spirit that impels an artist in his work, that is the source of all its worth. I am not writing a history of the art, but pretending only to indicate, in relation to the adornment of sacred places, the spirit in which an artist should approach them. His work is not by ornament to pander to the luxury of sense or satisfy the refinements of cultivated taste, but to aid architecture by supplementing its highest purposes, to lift poor mortality above its low estate, and to add force and interest to the spiritual influences around it.

Those great buildings which in still dignity tower above the busy cities around them, witness by their very forms to motives other than those which actuate common life; and within them all that the arts have combined to do, is to tell what those motives are, and, like incense in the air, to fill the atmosphere with the balm of rest and hope and heaven-directed thought. Thus can art minister to spiritual life, and thereby to life's greatest happiness. Its motto is "sursum corda," but as we look back on its history and note how various

are the forms and phases of character to which men's minds and the spirit of each passing age have moulded its pliant nature, how sacred art was felt to be, with what reverence its first essays were inspired, with what reserve its powers were invoked; and as the cravings of a fainting faith in days of trouble cried for its help, or weak intelligence hailed with gratitude the beautiful language of its instructive imagery, we see how art betook to bolder steps, and, impelled by new motives to satisfy the world's desires, drew from the dramatic scenery of history, and the vivid truths of life, the language of her appeals, losing hold on the heart as she gained on the understanding, and filling with the limited realities of facts and things, the space that in a former age had been occupied by the free spirit and expanding thoughts of allegory.

The development of realism had its losses as well as its gains. It had progressed steadily from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, when the classical furor, carrying all before it, forced art into a new direction, turning Christian subjects into academic studies, and gradually materialising its heart. What classicism left, the contemporary advance of philosophy and science destroyed, fascinating the intelligence of the age with theories which opened a new heaven to the flights of imagination. Art became artificial; the source of all its spiritual interest was sapped, and the springs of its spontaneous poetry were dried up.

In discordant contrast with all that early art had conceived, with all that Christian art throughout all its ages had consecrated, with all that early English poetry, "with its strong Teutonic sense," had told and taught, a stilted allegory became the new ideal of the art, and as the sacred associations of its earlier years had lost all their charm, its novel symbols owed their creation to the inspirations of contemporary scholarship.

and secularity. So figures of Saturn, or of Death, in the interesting condition of a skeleton, presided over the tombs, brandishing a scythe or shaking an hour-glass in the face of the world by way of religious consolation. Neptune wielding his trident marked the sarcophagus of a Christian admiral,[1] and Fame, that would have gladly emulated the flight of the winged Niké of Pæonius, trumpeted to heaven the worldly glories of a Christian hero. If the cause of morality and religion happened to need advocacy, the figures of "Patience on a monument smiling at Grief" were suggested to the poet's mind, and the elegantly grouped trio of Faith, Hope, and Charity did duty for its Graces. But when the poetry of symbolism was invoked to aid religion's highest flights, then the obelisks of Egyptian superstition, the broken column of classic Greece, the weeping willow from the waters of Babylon, or the cinerary urn of pagan cremation, marked the Christian graves, and Death's head and cross-bones suggested the aspirations of immortality!

Such were the edifying symbols and emblematic figures by which art was engaged to interpret that kind of spiritual life which the age had drawn from materialism and philosophy. At another time it had been otherwise. A different inspiration had produced the natural poetry of such symbols as the palm, the dove with its olive branch, the heart with the cross upon it, the lamb, the anchor, and the crown. Even paganism had surpassed that Christian age of spiritual independence in the beauty of its emblematic art, by that deep and far-reaching poetry, which only simple sincerity and the true nature of unaffected religion, quite irrespective of its character or form, can inspire.

[1] The late Dean Mansel, describing one such monument in St. Paul's, suggested that the sceptre of the god might have been intended for the symbol of Tridentine theology.

The emblematic figure which for the longest time continued to be represented in Christian art was that of Ecclesia, the Church. It had begun in the early catacombs and continued into the heart of the middle ages, when it was supplanted by the figure of the blessed Virgin. As the Orante of the catacombs it impersonated the militant church in prayer on earth; as the Betrothed it stood nearer to the cross than the virgin Mother; as the Bride it had been seated on the heavenly throne. The female Oranti have been variously assigned to the portraits of the faithful, on whose tombs they were painted, or to the blessed Virgin, or to the Church as the woman regenerated, or the soul united to Christ, as individual peculiarities indicated them to be. The most respected authority of early Christian art writes thus about them, "Souvent l'orante represente, soit une martyre, soit une fidèle morte, et que plus d'une fois encore elle personnifie l'Eglise."[1]

Of the figures of "Jesus et Ecclesia" in MS. illumination, and of representations of Ecclesia in mosaic, I have written in a former essay,[2] where examples were given from works of the tenth and thirteenth centuries. But it is not only found in such monumental works as those, but in every other form and material of art. At the back of the Siegmaringen crucifix,[3] within a circle occupying the space of the intersection of the four arms, is engraved a female figure seated upon a throne, not crowned, but with apparently a polygonal nimbus, richly draped, holding in her right hand a standard and in her left a chalice, with the inscription, ✠ Sancta Æcclesia (holy church), engraved round the frame of the medallion. This crucifix is of about the same date

[1] Il Cavaliere T. B. de Rossi. *Images de la Vierge choisies dans les Catacombs de Rome.* 1863.

[2] Christian Mosaic, *supra*, page 160.

[3] An engraving of this is given in the *History of our Lord in Art*, by Lady Eastlake, vol. ii. p. 332.

as the great mosaic of the triumph of the Church, in the character of Christ's Bride upon His throne, in the church of Sa. Maria in Trastevere at Rome.

Of about this period, or probably somewhat earlier, there is a remarkable illustration of Ecclesia in an illuminated MS. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, where the figures of Ecclesia and Christ are side by side, in the same attitude as in the famous Roman mosaic, Christ's arm being thrown over her neck, with the hand appearing on the opposite shoulder. The Bride is crowned; her drapery is of gold colour and emerald green, the napkin beneath the crown being blue. Both figures have a golden nimbus, and by one is written the monogram $\overline{\text{XPC}}$, by the other "ecclīa." Like the Roman mosaic, in which all the scriptural quotations are taken from the Song of Songs, this picture also illustrates that bridal poetry, being the illumination of an initial letter of one of St. Thomas Aquinas's sermons on that book.[1]

The emblematic accessories of the chalice and the flag mark this figure in almost all the examples where she stands beside the cross. As the accepted Bride she is frequently contrasted with the faithless bride of the Jewish Church, who is also usually distinguished from other figures by carrying a standard. In mediæval designs the figure of the Church abounds in painted glass, as in that of Chartres, Mans, Bourges, and St. Denis, sometimes carrying a cross, sometimes a model of a little church, usually with a nimbus about its head and crowned; while the figure of the Jewish Church is treated with indignity, being thrust away with hand or spear, or, as in the painted glass at Chartres, she has her eyes bandaged and blinded by a demon; or, as in that of Mans, she faints despairingly into the arms of Aaron, while St. Peter crowns the accepted Ecclesia; or in

[1] Lib. Bod., Laud MS. 127, old number, beneath it [Laud 150].

that at St. Denis, where she is repudiated by Christ, who turns with favour to His accepted Bride. As such it is also found in MS. miniatures, on carved ivories, and in sculpture. Of the former there is a curious illustration in a miniature belonging to the church of St. Cross at Ratisbon, in which, to avoid all mistake, the Church has her title as the Bride plainly written "Sponsa." She stands next to the cross and herself pierces the side of the Crucified, while another figure, named Fides, issuing from a cloud, holds out the chalice to catch the blood. Other figures taking part in the scene are similarly named Pity, Wisdom, and Obedience, who with gentle care fasten the nails of the cross. On the opposite side to the Sponsa, is the contrasted group of an angel reaching from a cloud and urging away from the cross the figure of the Synagogue, who flies, with her mantle wrapped closely round her, and carrying in her hand the broken staff of her standard. In another German painting[1] which forms part of a thirteenth century altar-piece a similar group is found, where the angel with rougher hand urges the unfaithful Synagogue away at the point of a spear. The sacramentary of Metz, now in the National Library at Paris, is believed to have been written and illuminated for Bishop Dogon, the son of Charlemagne, about A.D. 850, and in one of the miniatures of this MS. the Church is represented standing close to the cross and reaching up with her chalice to receive the blood from Christ's wounded side, while the Virgin and St. John stand at a distance to the right and left.

In sculptured ivory there is a plaque on the binding of an evangeliary of the ninth century in the Treasury of Tongres, in the diocese of Liège, on which four figures stand beside the cross. Those of the Virgin and St. John are placed outside; and nearer

[1] Forster's *Monuments de la Peinture en Allemagne.*

to the cross, on the dexter side, is a graceful figure of a young woman holding in her right hand three flowers, and, in her left, the pole of a banner, against which the profile of her head is beautifully relieved. This is Ecclesia, and the three flowers in her hand are the triple symbol of the revelation of the Divine Nature, committed to her custody for the benefit of the world. She is herself the emblem of the world's new birth through that revelation. The blessed Virgin has been also regarded in the same light, and has been therefore called the second Eve; but Ecclesia, the spouse of Christ, is pre-eminently so,[1] for the Church of Christ is the "Electa," the embodiment of all its members, and is not figuratively only but really one body[2] with Himself, and thereby has been otherwise named His Bride. Contrasted with her on the other side of this composition is another young woman symbolising the Jewish Church, and carrying in her hand the palm branch, the emblem of her country Palestine, who, turning from the cross, looks back at it over her shoulder in scorn. In the sky above, two flying angels hold a crown above the head of Christ. On the great ivory plaque which forms part of the binding of an evangeliary, that the Emperor St. Henry (A.D. 1002-1024) gave to the cathedral at Bamberg, and now preserved in the library at Munich, the subject of the crucifixion is elaborately carved, and supported by others below it, of which the Maries visiting the tomb is the principal, with emblematic figures of the Sea and the Earth beneath them. In this composition Ecclesia is a most expressive figure. She stands close to the cross, and, with her head thrown

[1] On this subject St. Augustin writes in one of his sermons thus: "Quid enim profluxit de latere nisi sacramentum quod accipiunt fideles, Spiritus sanguis et aqua? . . . De ipso sanguine et aqua significatur nata Ecclesia. Et quando exivit sanguis et aqua de latere? Quum dum dormiret Christus in cruce; quia Adam in Paradiso somnum accepit, et sic illi de latere Eva producta est."

[2] 1 Corinthians xii. 13; Ephesians i. 22, 23; Colossians i. 18, 24.

back, looks up straight into the face of the dying Saviour; Longinus stands below her, and with a long lance inflicts the wound from which, with the chalice in her hand, she receives the blood. The standard rises from behind her with its flag flying above her head. The whole subject of this ivory is beautifully thought out by the sculptor. He has placed the crucified figure lying calmly against the cross, made of the wood of a rough tree, with angels flying above it, and above them the hand of God in the act of benediction. The Virgin and the other Maries stand together behind Ecclesia; and on the other side, the sponge-bearer is close to the cross, with St. John behind him; and beyond them is another figure of Ecclesia with her standard in her left hand, and with her right stretched out upon the edge of a shield, which a majestic figure of the Synagogue holds upon her knees as she sits upon a canopied throne with a civic crown upon her head.

A remarkable figure of Ecclesia, altogether different from those described, is sculptured on an ivory slab in the National Library at Paris. On the space, which in the Bamberg ivory is occupied by a huge serpent coiling round the base of the cross, here sits upon a throne a finely-draped figure of Ecclesia, with her head turned to look upward to the Crucified, holding in her right hand the banner, and with her left hand supporting a globe, the symbol of the world, and of her commission to it.[1] The groups round the crucifixion are also arranged in an unusual manner. On the dexter side the Virgin and St. John stand with their arms extended toward the cross, and on the left side is another figure of Ecclesia, in an attitude of energetic address, with her right hand pointed at a queenly figure seated on a throne before her, impersonating Jerusalem as the

[1] St. Mark xvi. 15; St. Matthew xxviii. 19.

emblem of the Jewish Church, draped richly, holding in her left hand, as it rests upon her knee, the axe-shaped knife of the executioner, with the right hand grasping the pole of a large banner, and having a unique nimbus formed of a circular wall and five towers, which stand out with their pointed roofs like rays round her head.

There are other illustrations as careful and beautiful as these, but I need trouble the reader with no more than one, which belongs to an important work in marble of the thirteenth century. It is the panel by Niccola Pisano in the baptistery pulpit at Pisa, representing the crucifixion already described. Here Niccola has introduced the Christian and the Jewish Churches in contrast, behind the crowded groups on each side of the cross. On the right, above the Christian multitude, the young and graceful figure of Ecclesia, attended by an angel, leans forward and holds a vase to catch the blood falling from Christ's right hand; and in contrast to this group, and above the crowd of Jews, an older woman personifies the unfaithful Synagogue, holding out her standard as she hurries from the scene, and turns her head back reproachfully toward the angel who follows and urges her away.

The refinement of taste and labour expended on such works as these, which were but among the minor accessories which furnished and adorned the sacred places of the early and middle ages, shows how deeply penetrated Christendom was with the beauty of idea which pervaded the history and doctrines of the faith; and if in such lesser works we find such thought and care, still more do the grander features of its arts, whether constructive or decorative, give expression to the same spirit of strong faith and sincere devotion.

The enthusiasm of artistic life which characterised the great building age of the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries, producing works of architecture and the accessory arts with a power rather of creative genius than of growth, can only be likened to that sudden morning of joy and beauty to which the world awakes when, in April, Nature breaks the bonds of winter with the rush of her irrestrainable life. The reality of a genuine love sweetened all its labour, and allowed no hindering thought of difficulty or fatigue to stay its rapid course. Inspired with truth, and strengthened with sincerity, it won the whole heart of its age, and with the brightness of its vigorous life it awakens the dormant sympathies of our own.

That harmony of result was produced in days long gone by, when the arts were not dissevered. Those were days of much interest for us to look back upon, when all that we now see and do was in its first vigorous germ of growth. There was a stir and struggle everywhere. Life was rough. Society was chaotic. The turmoil of the world outside had driven into communities men who cared for other things than the amateur romance of knight-errantry, or the alternations of dulness and uproar of the feudal castle. Those communities were held together by ties of sympathy and rules of religion. There is a sunny brightness in the picture which one's imagination conceives of their inner life; and, whether one's dreams of them be true or false, one can picture, without exaggeration, the happy flow of their golden hours, when all worked together with singleness of heart, inspired by one spirit and working to one end—the trades with their handicraft, the arts with their poetry, raising those beautiful retreats for learning and shrines for devotion, which, even in their ruins, form the models of our taste.

The early styles of sculpture and painting in those days were born of architecture, and moved onward with it. Artists were creating their arts as they went

on side by side. The masters had little to teach. The sources of instruction were few and difficult to reach. The painter was ignorant of pictorial effects. He knew little or nothing of the principles of design. He had but little science in the use of colours, and less of chiaroscuro. His drawing was indifferent. His knowledge of anatomy was but small. There was but little to be seen of other works of art, and less to be gained by the sight of them. Such was the case of the Christian painter on the revival of art in the early middle ages—and it sounds but a sorry one. But the case of the early classic artist had been to a certain degree the same. Yet they both worked on with the happiest results. They worked in entire sympathy with the ideal of their architect—and, however imperfect their art may have been in science or technicality, they found their just reward in a grand and reposeful unity of effect, which, after all, is the greatest charm that even the most consummate art in any form can produce.

Religion had been the great motive of them both. Pagan and Christian, far apart in time and place, had thus both worked upon their temple walls. Their pictures were not pictures in our sense. The resources of their art were limited. They had little care for foregrounds and backgrounds. The grouped figures told their story with but little artifice; their composition was broad and simple. They worked for earnestness of expression rather than for power of effect. Their accessories, chosen to aid the composition or to explain the subject, were few, and those commonly rather symbolical than real. Simple as all this was, it satisfied all need. It was the representation rather of the artist's *thought* than the attempt to *realise* a scene. The design sufficed to illustrate the story. It was hampered by no detail. Its motive and sentiment were impressed upon it—and then the imaginations of

the multitude were left to wander about it unimpeded and undisturbed. Such was the work of those times. It was in one sense merely the bud of art; but certainly in another it was the full-blown flower of poetry.

When this art had grown to its full and purest practice, it is remarkable how similar were the principles on which it was worked at periods far remote from each other. During the fourth and fifth centuries B.C., and from the earliest days of Christian art to the end of the fourteenth century, wall paintings, whether of figures or ornamental design, were conceived in the same spirit. Painting was at both those periods understood architecturally—it was practised so, and *not* as an independent art working for its own glory. It worked under rule, and was subject to the laws and style of construction. Of all the arts subsidiary to architectural completeness, it was the most important; and when all the rest had done their work, it was the painter who brought their labours into harmony and gave them that last touch of bloom which made their effect complete.[1]

It is an interesting question in the study of all decorative arts applied to sacred buildings how far we should resort to old styles. The argument that any such resort or revival would be only retrogressive must in consistency forbid recurrence to the ancient styles of architecture itself, whether classic or Christian, no less than to the styles of their decoration. But the question itself is not easily answered; it involves so much more of individual inclination and feeling than of aught else, that the answer can be but ill fitted into words. Those styles represent intelligent principles, and they

[1] The subject of the distinctive principles between wall painting and picture painting would follow here, but as they have been stated in the former essay on Colour in Sculpture and Architecture, I must not repeat it here, but refer the reader to Essay V., Part II.

possess the deeper interest of their associations with the habits and opinions of their times. Those styles grew naturally in the atmosphere of national life. They were results of the forces of opinion and civilisation. Their constructive forms were developed, as all architecture was, under the needs imposed by climate, but their beauty was the embodiment of the national soul; and the detail of all other arts expended on it expressed the varying tides of popular sentiment or aspiration.

In old times art was definite; it was not distracted by the multiplicity of opinion and the internecine interests of modern times. They are called the arts of peace; but it would belie their origin to confound the peace in which fine arts flourish with the worthless leisure of national stagnation. Peace they required, but the peace of independent genius that could stand like a pillar in a storm. Genius has shone the brightest in the agitation of national life; an agitation, not that of destructive political strife and revolution, but the stir of national intelligence, and in that vigorous action both of public and private life of which that movement is the spring. National arts were the creation of the individual reply to the demands of public spirit. They developed, indeed, in quiet places and in quiet souls amid surrounding agitation. Those haunts of rest and quietness, by the sheer contrast of their peace, fostered habits of thought that were but ill at ease among the contentions of public life; and such men as sought their gentler shade, gave expression to the spirit that was moving in them, in the forms and language of their national poetry and arts, which were the solace to the hearts and the stay of the souls of the working and weary world.

An artist would revolt, and rightly too, against any retrogression degrading to his art; but he may not

always be right as to what really is retrogression. The characteristics of classical painting he would probably allow, considering them mainly much the same as his own ; but he might object to the styles of so-called Gothic arts in sculpture and painting as imperfect ; and here, but only as regards their technicalities, he would be right again. To regard them solely with contempt and antipathy would be but an exhibition of blind prejudice, at once both short-sighted and small-hearted. Those styles and characters of arts mark the stages of national culture, and are the turns and idioms of its phraseology. As such they are worth learning ; and excluding those that savour of mere barbarism and ignorance, there are in them all, for those who will take the pains to look, elements that may be separated from the rest, and are such as the fundamental language of all art includes. It may be that some one with special insight into the underlying spirit of archaic art may have repeated its peculiarities so as to have aroused antipathy. He knew, perhaps, better than his critics, its faults no less than its excellencies ; but its imperfections were immaterial to him, for its specialities were to him distinctly representative ideas, interesting from their associations, and so full of intention and reference, that his mind was engrossed by them, and all its superficial imperfections and technical faults were passed over unheeded. If he failed in practice, it was only through forgetfulness that no artist works for himself alone.

There are, indeed, styles of old work in drawing and design that are not fine art at all. Art they may be, as hieroglyphics are, or the demoniacal ornamentation of Mexican painting or the fetiches of savages ; but when art comes to make itself felt as fine art by touching the fine feelings of our nature, its elements are evident at once, and, with the intuitive discretion of a true artist, may be used, turned, and interpreted to

good effect, no matter what the specialities of the style may be. Beauty may be worked out wherever an element of real fine art can be found. Granted that a marked conventionality is forced upon the artist who, for harmony of architectural effect, is obliged to adopt the characteristics and specialities of a style ; but his apology is in his acknowledged acceptance of peculiar conditions. There is a congeniality between all those arts that have grown up together, that can be felt but not described. He felt this, and adapted his own art to conditions for which he was not responsible, but he followed them for consistency and harmony's sake.

Styles of some sort there must be, and buildings must follow them in the principles of their construction ; but the subject here is the adornment of that construction, not only in merely decorative ornament but in illustrative representations ; and in both of these, consistency offers an ideal of practice which seems to override all else ; for all ornament in art, if nature is to be any guide, must take its rule from natural principles, and of them the first of all is the rule of growth ; so that as in nature individuality is complete in every object by the consistent growth of all its parts, and is the first and greatest element in its beauty, so in every style of art that character in design and form of ornament is best which follows the construction out of which it grew.

Conventionality of some sort is inevitable. The whole art of painting is a convention : by its transference of all the relief, distance, and gradations of natural effects to a level surface it transmutes the act of vision, and calls in the aid of the imagination as interpreter; its many styles and methods are but so many conventionalities, some right some wrong, but all included in that broad discretion, with which every independent artist must be allowed to work. It is a mistake to

confound conventionality with the blemishes of an undeveloped art. Modern art has rested too exclusively on the study of naturalistic combination. Its ancient style or principle was not so, but was as complete as it was simple. It may be called, as it has been, the "Monumental," the "Sculpturesque," the "Heroic." I care not what its name be, but I am confident that its genius must be awakened if ever the great art of painting is to rise again to its level of full honour, to extend its field of poetry and instruction, and to be again what it once was, what all time has demanded of it and now demands again—a power of abstract and ideal expression, in harmony with that greatest creation of man's genius—architecture.

This is the best reply that I can make in so few words to the doubts and questions about conventionality, and these are the simplest reasons I can offer for our regard and reverence due to ancient styles of art. If an artist has the genius to appreciate them and the heart to love them, let him follow them ; elsewise not at all. Styles and their conventionalities are the idioms of artistic expression ; and if an artist cannot feel them he cannot interpret them, and then had better to leave them alone.

The extent to which colouring and figure painting was employed on the walls of sacred buildings in ages when art seemed dead and all culture that could have enjoyed it seemed *nil*, would surprise many whose eyes and ideas have been trained to the Puritan negative of whitewash and bare stone. The times and work were rough but real. Stucco and plaster, which coated the interiors of such buildings as at all aspired to completeness, were the simple and honest preparation for the artist. But they were perishable materials. Literature, more durable than gesso, has, however, preserved the story of art's services to religion, and so mingled with

references to the lives and work, the ideas and motives of those who produced them, as to have spread out a web of interwoven incident and anecdote of inexhaustible interest that tells to us, more plainly than they were themselves aware, the source and secret of their inspiration.

The sacred memorials of earliest Christian life, the storied pictures, the poetic allegory that covered the walls and monuments of the catacombs, were the endeared models that for centuries formed the subjects of the artist's work. Even in the darkest and wildest days of that "distress of nations with perplexity" that overwhelmed Europe from the ninth to the eleventh century, we hear everywhere of cathedrals and churches completely illuminated with sacred subjects. Many of the failing pictures of the catacombs were repainted in the ninth century. The mosaics that adorned the basilicas of Rome, Milan, Pavia, Ravenna, and Torcello in the south; of Greece, Constantinople, and Palestine in the east, were but the exemplars for less costly work elsewhere. In northern Europe the first cathedrals of Germany and France followed in their course. In the tenth century at Treves, Avignon, Rheims, Auxerre, Hildesheim, and others, the walls were covered with paintings and enriched with embroidered draperies, metal work, and marble; and still earlier, the gold mosaic of the church at Toulouse, won for it the title of St. Marie la Daurade. In Germany, Charlemagne promulgated laws for the covering the walls of churches with paintings, authorising them by the publication of his enlightened opinion in these words, "Whereas we despise nothing that relates to images except their worship, we sanction the use of the figures of the saints in our basilicas, not for their adoration, but as memorials of their works and for the adornment of the walls." In another place he prescribes the use of pictures in

churches to draw the rude Saxon from his less splendid temples, and to teach him his new faith.[1]

In the early British Church whatever art may have prevailed, we know but little of it beyond what St. Columba's devoted followers brought from Iona, and of what Bede tells of Biscop's purchases of pictures at Rome, with which he adorned his church at Wearmouth. But, once awakened, the spirit of the arts broke out like sunshine from a storm, and spread its gladness far and wide with the rapidity of light.

The first important impulse to art in England was due to the Lombard archbishop Lanfranc, when, after building his cathedral at Canterbury, he so adorned it that "by the splendour of colours and the loveliness of beauty his noble art delighted all hearts."[2] His successors continued to foster the taste he had initiated by colouring the flat, wooden ceiling,[3] characteristic of Norman buildings, and painting the walls. The influence of the art thus introduced is too well known by the industry of archæology to need illustrations here; but, as the sad case is with us now, that if we seek the specimens of our early arts we must be contented with their ruins, the scraps that time and trouble have left must suffice us to suggest what no exaggerating fancy is needed to complete, and to show how the national spirit became interested in the work

[1] "Ut honorem habeant majorem et excellentiorem quam fana idolorum." Capitul. *De part. Sax.* anno 789.

". . . Ut missi nostri per singulos pagos prævidere studeant, primum de ecclesiis . . . in tectis, in maceriis, sive in parietibus, sive in pavimentis, nec non in picturâ, etiam et in luminariis," etc. Capitul. anno 807.

"Dirutæ ecclesiæ pleniter restaurentur atque ornentur." "Si vero essent ecclesiæ ad jus regium proprie pertinentes, laquearibus vel muralibus ordinandæ picturis, id à vicinis Episcopis aut abbatibus curabatur." Capitul. *Car. Mag.*

[2] William of Malmesbury, "splendore fucorum et pulchritudinis gratiâ, ars spectabilis rapiebat animos."

[3] "Ibi cælum ligneum egregiâ picturâ decoratum." Gervasius, *in loco.*

of artistic expression, and how genuine was the national feeling that characterised its works.

We learn by the many records of local history, which continental nations have more happily preserved than ourselves, how the practice prevailed, at the very outset of Christian art in Europe, not merely of ornamenting parts of consecrated buildings, but of covering them entirely with sacred subjects. There are many relics of old work in English churches which authorise the idea of such having been also the case here. The interiors of Norman buildings were usually not left rough, but coated with a thin layer of stucco, but so thin as to have too often perished, and to have carried away the old paintings with it. There are, therefore, few, if any, relics of that early time of a building entirely covered with its old pictures more complete than that of the little chancel of the church of Kempley, in Gloucestershire, where the whole church was originally covered with sacred subjects. In the nave only a few scraps and indications remain, but the chancel is in a fair condition, and is painted throughout. Its wagon roof, which is but a continuation of the walls, without any interrupting cornice, is covered with figures, and, with the side walls, appears to form one large general subject of the glorification of Christ. His figure, within an aureole, occupies the centre of the arched ceiling, and above and below it are somewhat rudely arranged those of the Virgin and St. Peter, St. Michael weighing a soul, the seven golden candlesticks, and the four evangelistic symbols; and below them, on each side, six of the apostles are seated under canopies that indicate their twelve thrones, expressing by gest of head or hand the adoration of their Master enthroned above. This is evidently a genuine English work of the date about 1160.[1]

[1] The arch of the wagon-roof has given way, and caused a deep crack

The traditional subjects of old Christian art had at once fascinated our people, and were already common within a short time after the days of Lanfranc. As might be expected, their relics are but rude, but none the less curiously interesting from the original character of their design. For example (and one such may be enough to illustrate many), upon a stone (five feet long by three broad) that had been removed and formed the step of the north door of the Norman church at Balsover, is sculptured, in high relief, the scene of the adoration of the Magi. The Virgin Mother is sitting up at the end of a long bed, with the child Jesus standing in front of her. On the farther side stands one of the Magi, and another at the foot of the bed holding out his gift, which is in the form of a censer, and he is in the attitude of swinging it in front. The third of his company stands a little way behind him, and above them is a long-shaped projecting block with the heads of two animals protruding over it, evidently, but most rudely, intended to represent the manger, with the ox and ass.

The conditions of British life had not been favourable to the development of the arts, but with the impulse given to them before the Conquest by Edward the Confessor, and subsequently by Lanfranc, their first faltering steps soon changed to that grand march which carried them triumphantly through the middle ages. Beautiful in the whole course and order of their being they had come forth, the creatures of imagination realised by genius, in answer to the needs and to express the hearts of men feeling their way upward, from the impeding mist and conscious evil of the present, to a higher life, of which not the mere

along its greater part, much injuring the figures. The walls are in good condition. There is in the British Museum MS. Department an English psalter in precisely the style of this painting numbered in the catalogue "Nero C 4."

thought and hope, but the sure and certain conviction, possessed their souls. But at length a new ideal and standard of life was propounded and prevailed, encroaching upon their reign, and a scholarship, foreign to them, introduced antagonism to all they had held sacred. And now those arts have been long since at rest. Their creative energy was aroused by no new appeals; the thought and fancy of the inconstant world took other flights elsewhere. Their journey was over, their work was done, but their monuments remain the splendid memorials of their life, and still among the sad scenes of desolation, where passion and neglect have wrought an equal ruin, their spirits haunt the shadows of their wasted shrines, and the echoes of their poetry still linger upon the air.

But why all these arts, and to what good can they have served? Their action and their progress were involuntary. They sprang from unknown depths; their purpose was uncalculated and indefined. They grew up, as it were, involuntarily in the atmosphere of Christian faith; but that faith was a thing of spirit, and theirs was but of base material. Could, then, such work as theirs supplement the deficiencies of Christian souls or compensate for the poverty of worship? Could their poor perishable forms have any worth in the sight of Him "who sees not as man sees"? Could the altars devoted to His service, or great halls, consecrated by the assembly of His worshippers, be the better in His regard for all that gold and "goodly stones," already His own, could supply, or for what the cunning of men's hands could do in them? In the privacy of communion between the spirit of the man and the spirit of his Maker, No; but as "a tribute of reasonable service from humanity to God," Yes.

Art is the chorus of universal praise. If the pure

fountain whence fine art sprang were reached, and its stream cleared from the defilements of folly and corruption that in the sad course of human life have polluted it, the source of universal joy and adoration would be laid bare, whence, through the ages, the great hymn of all humanity has ascended from earth to heaven.

It is only in the quietude of a contemplative spirit that a work of really religious art can be conceived. The subject does not make the art. Many a work of so-called religious art has been produced from which not one spark of religious light could ever gleam. For such a work, therefore, as the restoration and adornment of the fabrics of the Christian Church we need such men as can rise to the high level of its faith, with pure motive and confidence in it. Such alone have been, and such will ever be, the men whose works have power to influence the world by the sacredness of the life which beams through all they put their hands to.

If the exterior of the Christian temple may typify the rude contest of the Christian in the outer world, the interior may well express the peace and beauty of his inner life. Let, therefore, the exteriors be as rough as men may care to build them—let them be fortified against storms and enemies of all sorts—but let us have peace and sacred quietude within, where the dignity of beauty is not marred, nor the fine religious sense insulted. Thus only can that tranquillity be secured that must be art's first and final purpose in such a place. She has to provide there not for quiet spirits only, but for troubled ones, who come there to find rest. It should be a place of pleasantness and peace, where sight meets no distraction and thought no disturbance, but where both sense and heart may find repose in its sacred shade.

The seclusion of nature's calm retreats, the still solitudes of the forest, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, may afford desired spots for thought and devotion; but in the more common course of life in the crowded cities or unquiet homes, it is to those sacred fanes that architecture has raised among them, that men owe the precious opportunities of spiritual rest. Fine art has done her best in them to foster the associations of comfort and strength. It is in the great art of architecture, as in a jewel, that all other arts are set, and all that each one has perfected for the benefit and happiness of mankind here finds its resting-place. A nation's temples have ever been the centre of the nation's arts. The history, the poetry, the religion of the world, have been written in them. The power and devotion of human genius have been lavished upon them, the most pure and favourite handmaids of a nation's faith.

It may have been that in this high purpose their power has been some time misused. If so, the error lay in those who perverted them. It was their power which dictated the destruction of their monuments. But art is immortal. Men's souls need an alphabet of expression above and beyond the alphabet of common life. They have arts at their command for it. It has been by them that generations and generations have learnt to read each other's thoughts and live in each other's hearts. The arts have been the records of the devotion, the sufferings, and the aspirations of mankind. They have come and they have passed away. It is now our day. The unceasing stream flows by us now, and for our short life we direct its current. The arts are in our hands to use or to misuse them. Our honour in them will depend upon our motive; and whatever our works may be, we shall live in them to all time—for contempt or for gratitude.

But here, in this place, rises before our eyes one of England's grandest monuments, worn by age and battered by revolution, but who will dare to touch those sacred walls?[1] Time has often proved the best of artists, and there has spread upon those stained and mottled stones such records of the past, and upon those chipped monuments and broken architecture, that tell of wild days of violence and change, has traced such lines of story as no words can tell. The softening breath of centuries has toned and tinted them into such a mystery of loveliness as no hand can paint. Beneath the shadow of those arcades storied antiquity rests there in silence. The sun rays streaming through those shattered panes, like the harmony of many voices carried upon the wind, still spread their vague and tender flood of colours on those walls, and, like the inaudible music of thought, the echoes of the past still ebb and flow upon them. Once swept away no thought can restore the poetry of the past, nor can the hand replace it.

[1] Lincoln Cathedral in 1868, when the short paper that forms the basis of this essay was read before the Lincoln Diocesan Architectural Society. At that time considerable work was contemplated there.

ESSAY IX

THE BUILDERS AND BUILDINGS OF THE ABBEY OF ST. PETER AT GLOUCESTER, NOW THE CATHEDRAL

THE estimate of anything from an artist's point of view is apt to be as various as the minds that make it; and commonly to share the same fate in its reception, by the light and shade cast upon it from every variety of individual taste or capacity. A naturally good taste, helped by a congenial spirit and occupations, is a pleasant possession; but it is a better guide to begin with than to end with, for fine art is a deep well to draw from; it covers a wide space, it penetrates far below the surfaces of things, and it appeals to a wide range of sympathies, embracing subjects near akin to science and poetry, philosophy and religion.

It is this last that has most to do with the arts which have combined to produce these sacred buildings, where architecture, consecrated to its highest purpose, has appropriated from every art beside all such elements of religious expression as could contribute to its own completeness. Thus was this great abbey of St. Peter once complete, as it stood in the fulness of its beauty, its pride of beauty; but troublous times have intervened and left a wreck.

Those who have read the history of such establishments as this have sickened at the repetition of wreck and ruin which has been their fate; devastations by

fire and sword, by the irruption of hostile and pagan tribes, reducing the monasteries and churches to ashes, Christianity itself being all but extinguished; and what is yet more painful, the fitful wantonness of our own people, whose passions, once aroused, have been like the bursting of a pent-up storm which seems to revel in ruin. Such was the impulse which now above three hundred years ago swept down, in succeeding tides of desolation, those monuments which, during past centuries, the highest culture, poetry, and religion of the nation had produced. Those who raised the storm had their reasons; some high-minded and pure, some base and contemptible; but not so the undiscriminating multitude; for a mob is not actuated by the refinements of religious opinion. It was no nice perception of varieties of faith that aroused their ignorant fanaticism. They had no thought nor wish to change an item of their creed; but it was the resentment of a discontented multitude, discontented not with their religion, but with their oppressed condition, utilised by the partisans of politics and religion, goaded on by its own sense of injury, injustice, and suffering, and fanned into a flame of destruction by any pretext that could serve the purpose of its unreasoning vengeance. The Church had lorded it overmuch; its exactions and its presumption had often pressed hard upon the people. So the day of retribution came; and, as usual, where blind ignorance took part, reform was ruin, and the loss irreparable; and here in this that once was among the richest and most beautiful of national monuments bare walls alone remained, and all that had clothed them with life was no more.

It had been under happier auspices, and in days of simple faith, now just twelve hundred years ago, that the first abbey of St. Peter at Gloucester had its beginning. It was founded and endowed by kings,

and royal dames were its first abbesses. Its buildings stood near those around us. On the north side of the choir of the present cathedral, and next to the high altar, is a monument known as that of the Viceroy Osric, the noble-born friend of Ethelred, the second Christian King of Mercia, by whose authority he founded this abbey. This monument is the tribute of the last abbot to the man who, eight hundred years before, had laid the first stone of the first abbey of St. Peter. The recumbent figure holds the model of a church, which is interesting as a piece of archæological reverence on the part of a sixteenth-century abbot; for the character of its façade, roof, and tower is of the earliest type of Norman work, or even before it. The figure, unworthy of the royal name it bears, is such that the puritan iconoclast, dealing ruin right and left, passed it by with a smile, that the very ugliness of such a "graven image" saved him the trouble of breaking it.

At the time of the foundation of this abbey (A.D. 681) society was so broken, and private life so harassed by the disturbance of lawlessness and war, that as Christianity was fast spreading and arousing in men's minds aspirations for a better mode of life, for which no peace was found in their precarious homes, establishments were founded as refuges from the noise and storm around them, and as centres of religious life. Such were those of St. Hilda in the north, or St. Ethelburga in the east, and of Osric in our south-western Gloucester. But within a century the troubles prevailed, and war with all its vice and tumult occupied the ground, and the years of the first abbey of St. Peter were numbered. Never were the first fair blossoms of the early year more mercilessly withered by the biting winds of spring than were those first fair homes of peaceful life and charity ruined by the violence that marks their chequered history.

So ends the first age of our abbey. Its inhabitants were terrified, scattered, lost; and of their place and buildings not even the tradition of a memory remains. We may yet, however, form a fair idea of them, for it must be remembered that no art is isolated; it comes of that which was before, and hands on its lamp of life to those which follow it. The character of all building in all countries has of course depended first on climate, and then on the nature of materials at hand, and the ability of the people. All round Gloucester in those early days were vast forests, on one side covering the great part of what is now Worcestershire, on the other side the wide range of our Forest of Dean; and yet nearer, the picturesque outline of what we still know as the Hill of Robin's Wood; and just over Severn, but close at hand, where the aged oak of Lassington, and the Highnam chestnut-tree link our degenerate woodlands with the heroes of primeval forest. Such then was the wealth of building material, as easily got as the stubborn oak would yield to the axe, and as cheaply as the Severn boats and rafts would bring it; and the builder of the first abbey of St. Peter fetched it home, as Chaucer describes one in the "Miller's Tale":—

> . . . "I trow that he is sent
> For *timbre*, that our Abbot hath him sent."

There is still, in that once forest land of Cheshire, a fine example of the timber building of early times in the church at Warburton, where the piers and arches of the nave are formed of large oak-trees cut in half lengthways, based on stone blocks, and joining their curved forms above produce the arcades on which the whole superstructure is borne. A timber arch still marks the place of the north-west doorway, and the chancel is of similar construction.

Time and trouble have left us few examples; but there are so many valid grounds on which to formulate our ideas that it needs but little stretch of imagination to rebuild the first abbey of St. Peter. Like the first great church on the wild island of Lindisfarne, it may have been built with wood and thatched with reeds. Its aisles may have been arched with oak like those at Warburton; and its tower like that near at hand at Upleadon, where the long upright oaken timbers, with white panels between them, are like those which Holinshed admired in the buildings of old England which "are commonlie so strong and well timbered that there are not aboue foure or six or nine inches between stud and stud." Thus may we easily imagine that group of monastic buildings, bright with the contrast of dark oak and white panelling, with its long cloistral enclosure, and all the apartments for refectory, dormitory, and guest-house, with its church and its tower rising above them, on a site chosen for its quietude, on the farther side of what was then the sparkling stream of the Twiver, whose banks, covered with willows and alder-trees, separated it from the town;—an ancient town, whose British and old Roman buildings picturesquely mixed together, with the Severn rolling beneath them, with smiling meadows all around it, and the background of the beechy Cotteswolds, had won for it the title of "The Fair City" (*Caer Glowe*).

Such might have been, and probably was, the pleasant scene that presented itself, when just twelve hundred years ago King Ethelred came to visit his brother Wolfere's widow, or the sister of his friend Osric—Kymberga, the first abbess, whose name modernised into Kymbrose is still familiar to the poor of Gloucester by their most ancient hospital.

There is yet, however, another picture that we could draw, with at least some ground of truth, to

illustrate the state of the arts in England at that time, and particularly of such as might have been found at Gloucester, it may be as well to take it.

If the age had been dark, it certainly had been of all things darkest in relation to the arts; but before the foundation of this abbey the day of their revival had risen. From Iona to Canterbury Christianity was the dominant religion. It spread as an element of light and peace, and the undercurrent of its influence prevailed. Men woke to the horror of the crime around them. An ideal altogether new was introduced into their life. The reality instead of the mere superstition of spiritual existence was forced upon them. The conviction weighed heavily on many minds. Men craved for quietude, and yearned to escape from a life they had learned to hate. A new light had dawned upon them, and with it a sense of the beauty of that light. It awoke their dormant faculties of mind, heart, and imagination, and opened a fresh vista to the purpose and direction of their lives.

Monastic life afforded the only refuge: monasteries were the homes not only of religion but of learning, and then the arts came in to minister to them both; and thus their spark was kindled. Some years before that time two men came upon the scene whose enthusiasm fanned that spark into a flame. St. Wilfrid and his friend Benedict Biscop had learnt what art was among the grand relics of the south, and had returned from years spent in Italy and Gaul, not only to introduce the customs of the Roman Church among his old British fellow-Christians of the north, but to build them churches, till then unthought of, with finished masonry, with lead for roofing, and glass for windows. Their story has been too often told for me to repeat it here, or do more than to remind you how they had brought with them from France and Italy artists and workmen to revive the

art of building, and to teach the English the mysteries of painting and making glass; and how they founded monasteries and built churches, adorned with pictures and relics, service books, sacred vessels, and embroidery.

The earliest Christian churches of the south appear to have been constructed with the three clearly-marked divisions of the sanctuary, nave (with or without aisles), and narthex, for the ministry, the congregation, and the catechumens. Among the most interesting relics that time and revolution have spared is the underground church built by St. Wilfrid at Hexham. It was built about ten years before the foundation of the abbey at Gloucester, and is a complete model of the early Christian churches, with a chancel, a nave with aisles, and a narthex opening to the staircase which leads down to it, denuded of course of all that may have once embellished it, of small dimensions, but in perfect preservation, constructed of materials which seem to tell the tale of their origin in the great wall of Hadrian which is near at hand. But before the building of this crypt, and about twelve years before Osric began his work at Gloucester, St. Wilfrid had built a church at Ripon, about which Leland quotes this glowing description from Eddius, that it was "a basilica constructed of wrought stones from the foundation, and divers pillars and porticoes formed part of its arrangement." This church was dedicated to St. Peter, in the presence of Kings Egfrid and Ælwin. An underground chapel still remains of Wilfrid's work at Ripon.

To return to Gloucester. If we are to accept the document given by Dugdale, Wolfere the king, and not his brother and successor Ethelred, was the real founder of this abbey. Gloucester had but lately been added to his kingdom of Mercia, and he is there stated to have enlarged and beautified the town of Gloucester and laid

the foundation of the abbey. Laying the foundation may simply mean the assignment of lands for the establishment of the abbey. Then his brother and successor took up the work, and hence his charter of foundation to Osric. But Wolfere had been at Ripon, and must have seen Wilfrid's great church there. The bias of Ethelred's character was to peace, to the arts of peace, and to a religious life, as shown by the end he chose for it, for after thirty years spent in the weary work of ruling, he retired to the monastery of Bardley, among the fens of Lincoln, and there died. St. Wilfrid had been his intimate friend, and his guest at Bardley, and it is a fair inference that the works as well as the character of such a man must have exercised strong influence on a mind so entirely sympathetic as that of King Ethelred. It is also fair to infer that Gloucester must have occupied a prominent place in the mind of the whole royal family from the facts just mentioned about its foundation, from Wolfere's widow being its second abbess, and further, that the succeeding king and his friend Offa, King of the East Saxons, were among the number of its benefactors.

All this points but one way. I have no wish to exaggerate the supposition which can only be based on inference; but Gloucester evidently held no common place among the noblest and wealthiest of the land, who had thus centred their interest and influence upon it. Once more, and I leave it in your hands. Builders have been always reckless pilferers, and at these times no such idea as the sacredness of antiquity had entered their heads. Gloucester had been a Roman city, a wealthy one, with every building required for its commercial, military, and religious establishments. But these were then in ruins, and we may rightly fancy their massive sides and angles, like the great buttressed walls and nooks of many a mediæval cathedral, covered

and filled in with hives of houses piled up against them for support and shelter. But those mines of building stone were used for other purposes, as badly or as well as the world may think it; and just as the first subterraneous church at Hexham was built of the pilfered ruins of Hadrian's wall, so might the first church of St. Peter at Gloucester have owed its building materials to the wrecks of the walls, the Pretorium, the Forum, and the Temples, of which we now trace the foundation, the mosaics, and the bases of their ruined architecture.

However that might have been, little occurred to affect the architecture of those buildings till the beginning of the eleventh century. I am not concerned here upon the history of the abbey, interesting as it is in all respects, except as regards the story of the arts which have been associated with its building; otherwise there would be much to say here, and subsequently also much that for consistency's sake I must omit. The really important change in the circumstances of the place in those early days occurred when, under Bishop Wolstan of Worcester in A.D. 1022, it was changed from an establishment for secular clergy to a monastery under the rule of St. Benedict. The bishop found the church richly endowed, two of the Mercian kings having been, a few centuries before, its benefactors. The place was so important, and the opportunity so great, that he took the bold course of reconstructing the whole establishment, and of consecrating it afresh under the new title of St. Peter and St. Paul.

I am well aware how often in ancient Chronicles larger establishments than this at Gloucester are described as having a "lignea basilica;" and smaller ones as being, in plain English, built of wattle and dab, and roofed with straw. But at the time I am speaking of, stone was used in building quite small churches, such

as the one still nearly perfect at Bradford-on-Avon ;[1] and stone was then also used where in some places it would have to be brought from a distance, as at Deerhurst. Here at Gloucester all sorts of stone were easily obtained. The herring-bone masonry at Ashleworth and the reticulated work on the chancel at Dymock may be possibly of that period. On such an occasion as I was describing, some change in this building almost of necessity occurred ; and we might then have seen rising above Bishop Wolfstan's church a tower of that peculiar style that was then in vogue, marked by its masonry of long and short stones alternately, and even more marked still by the long narrow strips of stone, slightly relieved from the rubble surface of the walls, and dividing them into long upright panels.[2] The divisions of the stories of the towers being also marked by horizontal strips of the same sort, and the angle-headed window openings formed also of two short pieces leaning against each other.

It is easy to trace many features of the marble architecture of Greece and the Lycian monuments to the wooden construction out of which they had grown ; and here in Anglo-Saxon times we find, when stone was used for walls, the principal features both of construction and ornament were derived from the wooded framework with its white-wattled panels between, which had been the primitive style of the country ; and farther on still we may perhaps be allowed to trace, from those long flat strips of stone, the tall, thin, and pilaster-like projections which constantly divide in a similar manner the façades of Romanesque and Norman buildings, all

[1] *Vide* illustration of this building, E. A. Freeman, *English Towns and Districts*, p. 136.

[2] For illustrations of work of this Saxon period to which those buildings at Gloucester belonged, *vide* Fergusson's *Handbook of Architecture*, vol. ii. page 845 (Earl's Barton Tower), and E. A. Freeman's *English Towns and Districts*, pages 244-5, Towers at Oxford and Cambridge.

having their distant origin in the oak frame-work of former days.

Such, in the year 1022, may have been the tower of the newly-constituted abbey on the banks of the Twyver.

But the great change was yet to come. A subsequent bishop, a man of great ability and ambition, formed the scheme of a still more important establishment. His name was Ealdred, to whose lot it fell to crown both Harold and William of Normandy. He was not a man to do small things. His vigour may be inferred from the remonstrance he addressed to William the Conqueror, which brought the Conqueror on his knees before him in presence of his Court on the floor of Westminster Abbey. He held for some years the sees of Hereford and Worcester, including the present diocese of Gloucester; and he subsequently became Archbishop of York. If he and Wolsey could have interchanged their dates of birth, he might have played the part of Wolsey. This man, recognising the importance of the opportunity, acted on his resolve, and laid out a great scheme for the future Abbey nearer to the city. The sites almost invariably chosen for monasteries had been solitudes of sea-coast, forest, or fen; and in course of time the cottages of their dependants so accumulated as to change their solitude to a city. But here at Gloucester the city existed close at hand. The original monastery of St. Kymburga had chosen its site in a quiet place beyond the Roman wall, among the groves of alder-trees which stretched upwards from that island of the Severn which from them still holds its ancient name of Al-ney. But now the opportunity occurred for the foundation of an important establishment, capable of service both for its own inmates and for the city. He chose the new site, and there he built it.

According to Abbot Frocester's *History* this remarkable man was consecrated Bishop of Worcester in 1058, *i.e.* eight years before the Norman Conquest; and it records that he constructed the abbey church *de novo* from its foundation, and re-dedicated it according to its original title of St. Peter's. The next we hear of any building is in the time of the first Norman Abbot Serlo; and of that work we only learn that the first stone of the "*Glevornensis ecclesia*" (the Gloucester church) was laid in 1089, twelve years after the Conquest, and was consecrated with great pomp in 1100. Thus the great Abbey, of which the bulk now stands, was completed. It had been a gigantic undertaking; and we can easily imagine the workmen sitting down within the western wall to contemplate their finished work. They saw before them the vista of a grand arcade on massive piers, and in the distance, closed by an apse behind the high altar, and covered in from end to end by a flat ceiling of wood, panelled and painted as the fashion was. Right and left along the nave and choir, and all round the apse, vaulted aisles added to the grandeur of effect: beyond the choir were three chapels, with groined roofs and apses round their altars; and at the opening of the choir, north and south, were transepts, with chapels projected from them eastwards. In the centre, where the four great arms of the building met, rose a tower which might have been of wood, otherwise it probably was like that on Osric's tomb, with an interior arcade, and open like a lantern to the church below, as that of Tewkesbury was in Norman times. All round above the aisles of the choir was a spacious groined triforium, with chapel for chapel and altar for altar as below; and beneath them all a lower church (now miscalled the crypt), with chapels, aisles, and groins, and altars repeating all that was above. Nor was this nearly all, for that was but

the huge shell which enclosed the finer things of sculpture and glass, embroidery and metal work. But time would fail to tell of all outside—the transept towers, deep doorways richly carved, the great chapter-room, and the gloomy passage of the slype, with its long arcade leading out to the burial-ground—and all this vast and varied work of one style throughout, complete and beautiful in its unbroken unity. Those workmen may well have looked with awe on this gigantic product of their hands. The foundation for it would alone have been a thing for giants. But *was all this work really theirs?* Had the short term of eleven years sufficed to devise, to organise, to finish such a work as that—to collect its mountain of materials, with all the painful strain of transport to overcome, and all the rudeness of their machinery? As they sat there weary beneath its shade, had they, in that short space of fleeting years, shaped and finished such a work as this? If I had been one of those who had to answer, I should have answered "No."

If we remember the circumstances under which mediæval records were compiled, we shall not look for that accuracy of statement or description which we expect to find in the chronicles of our own days. The studious monks, happy in their heedlessness of time, at work in those quiet little carols which flank the whole length of the southern cloister, inditing or illuminating their parchment pages, were free from those distracting elements which mark the self-consciousness of modern literature; but less happily free and unaided by those facilities which modern life affords for its richness and truth. Their narratives were simple and unadorned; or if adorned at all, they were so by traditional illustrations, and influenced rather by the sacredness of wonder than the severity of fact. Thus it is that in reading Abbot Frocester's valuable chronicle, we are inevitably

struck by the broad and general terms which he applies to what in fact were important events, such as the frequent destruction of the abbey by fire, and the rebuilding of it; or where he describes the refounding of the vast establishment, with all the costly and complicated work that it entailed, without a word of reference to what remained of previous buildings, or of how their materials were used, their remaining parts incorporated, or who and whence their artists were.

In offering to you an outline of what appears to me the probable account of the building of this great abbey church, and taking all the recorded facts of its history as my guide, I venture to put it into a narrative form; and for that purpose I present to you a scene that might have very possibly occurred.

In that group of workmen there sat one who was a master among them, a man of some age and evident intelligence. A young monk of the Priory of Tewkesbury, but lately come to Gloucester, joined them, and asked many questions about the building; so the old mason told him this story. He said: "I am a native of Deerhurst. My father was a builder there, and he sent me to the monks' school at the Priory. I saw a great deal of building work under my father, for he did all the work for the Priory, and when the rich Earl Odda built a Royal Hall close by the old church of the Priory, my father built it for him. There was a very busy Bishop at Worcester then; his name was Ealdred; he was a great friend of the Earl's, and came and blessed his new buildings for him. But the biggest place the Bishop had to do with was here at Gloucester: and King Edward (God bless him!) was often here; for the place is a strong one, with that old wall and the castle down by the Severn and the marshes out beyond; and there's a sight of business done by the boats that come up from the sea. So King Edward liked the

place; and the Bishop, who was always wide awake to business (so he's got made Archbishop of York now), used often to come here; for the King liked all Church work, and buildings, and so forth, and had a number of Frenchmen about him; and as the Bishop was a great traveller, they got on very well together. The first time the Bishop came to Gloucester he brought me with him from Deerhurst, for he knew the Abbey here was in a bad state, and that I had a good knowledge of building and all that from my father. We found the place in a poor way; and the Bishop thought to please the King, and to get the King to help him, if he tried to build a large Church like what the King was building then near London.[1] So the Bishop and I talked it over; and the new Abbot here, Wilstan, he too thought to please the King, so we worked together and laid out a place for it close to where the old Roman wall was, so as to make it the Chief Church of the city; with the Abbey buildings snug and quiet on the other side. The Bishop had been in France and had seen all that was doing there; but he said it would be no use putting our English men to work like that, but to build in their own way strong and simple work like what our folk could do best. So we struck out the plan on the ground, and I was frightened when I saw how big the Bishop meant to build it, and I told him he'd never do it. So he set me over the work, and I got a lot of men and things together, and we began at the east end, and there the undercroft was built, with low vaults and large blocks of masonry to carry those above, and against them we built small columns to carry the groins. There were some small columns in the old ruined place close by; so we put them in the middle, under where the high altar was to be: they were like some I remember among the old Priory buildings at Deerhurst.

[1] Which we now know as Westminster Abbey.

So we got on and put up the piers of the choir—those big rounded ones that you see out there round the altar, such as our men could do, for they didn't like the sort the Bishop wanted, which was the French way of work, large square ones with lots of angles and notches and little shafts in them, which our folk weren't accustomed to. So we worked in our own way, and after some years we got the choir all done and ceiled it over flat with boards. Outside the church we built the slype leading out to the burial-ground, and we ceiled it plain like the undercroft; and we built a long wall where the cloisters were to be, which is now the Prior's garden. There was an arch in that wall which opened into the slype, and two others[1] into the Chapter House, which was a very large room built of wood, where good King Edward used to meet his Witan most years in winter time. And there was a long dormitory over the slype, which was built of wood too, but all those wooden buildings were burnt down. We were at work at the transepts at the same time: for the King was building his big church near London on a plan like a cross, which was quite new to us; and the Bishop here, thinking to make a fine thing and to please the King, was set on making his new church like the King's. We got on with the transepts, and finished their east walls and the chapels in them; but we never got any further; for the Bishop was always about the Court, and liked to have all the nobles about him, and he spent his money too fast with them. As soon as we got the choir ceiled he got the King's friends about him, and the Abbots of Malvern and Pershore, and the Priors of Tewkesbury and Deerhurst, and many

[1] These arches may still be seen, now embedded level with the wall both outside and within the chapter-house, and their stones bear evidence of fire, being burnt red, like those of the lower parts of the piers of the nave which were burnt by the blazing timbers of Abbot Serlo's original ceiling.

more, and there was a great feast, and he blessed the new church in the name of St. Peter. But he left us then, for the King was so pleased with him that he had him made Archbishop of York; and he stopped all the work here by seizing three or four parishes about here to repay himself for what he had spent; so there was no money to pay the men. And then the good King died, and the men went away to fight under King Harold, for they didn't want the French Duke William. So the place was left not half done, and so it remained for many years. But what grieved me most was that by that Bishop's way of living, and the cost of that great building, and his taking away the worth of those fine parishes from the Abbot here, the place was ruined; and the poor monks went away, for they had no means of living here any more; and Abbot Wilstan, with his heart nearly broken, left us and went to Jerusalem and died. So all our work was left to go to chance.

"After that, things were changed a good deal in England, and our old Bishop went from York and crowned the Frenchman King of England in good King Edward's own Church down by the Thames at Thorney. After brave King Harold's death some of our masons went to work for the French at Dover Castle, but I stayed here and did work at St. Oswald's Priory close by and St. Kyneburg's up in the town. Some six years after that, we had a Frenchman made Abbot here, one Serlo, who had been an Abbot before in France; and when he came here he found the place very poor, for Bishop Aldred had ruined it; and there were only two old monks and a few boys left in the place. Our good Abbot had been here just sixteen years (1088), when a great fire destroyed the roof and all the timber-work of the choir and made the place like a ruin, but our building was strong and the stones were not hurt. So the Abbot, who was well pleased

with all the work we had done in the choir, sent for me, as I knew all about it, and I went over it all with him. It was all sound but the groining of the undercroft, which had cracked, for we had had bad lime for mortar, and for many years there was no one here to care about it. But he was pleased at Bishop Aldred's plan, and as the choir part for the monks was done, he took to the nave, as Bishop Aldred had laid it out, and he ordered me to see to the building of it as a great church[1] for the town people, and he got the Bishop of Hereford here to lay the first stone of this work. But there was an earthquake that year, which made our old work in the undercroft all the worse; so some while afterwards he made us underbuild it with stronger piers and arches, as you can see if you go down there. Many of our men soon came back; and the French Abbot wanted them to build as they do in France; but our men didn't take to it; so we went on the same plan with those big piers as in Bishop Aldred's choir, only taller. But the Frenchman was not satisfied with our plain work; so we got stone carvers here, and all the arches were carved as you see, and the mouldings above too, and the groinings of the new aisles are carved, and all the work we did for him looks richer than any we did before; but the masonry looks the same, for the same men did the best part of it. And the French Abbot was so fond of rich work that when we put in the strong groins down in the

[1] In Abbot Frocester's *History* this building is described as the Glevornensis Ecclesia, and rightly so described "thec hurch of the city of Gloucester," for the nave, which was all that the Abbot Serlo had to build, beside the repairs after the fire in choir and transepts, was that part of the conventual church frequently known as the "ecclesia parochialis," with its altars in it, on the west side of the main screen, for the people's services, as at St. Albans, the choir being properly the "chorus fratrum," reserved entirely for the monks of the Abbey. The "church of the city" was not necessarily the parish church, which in this case was that of St. Mary de Lode.

undercroft, he had them carved too; and there is a chapel down there on the right near the east end that he had made very rich with little shafts and arches; we could only put them up there by standing them out against the old work, and these were carved too. You'll always know the work we did for him, for he was never pleased without some rich work somewhere about; and we finished the transepts and the tower, and finished it above with a wooden steeple, and we built the new chapter-house just where the old one was burnt, and put little arches, all richly cut and carved, along the sides of it; but you'll never find one scrap of our old work with anything like that upon it, or anything else but strong and plain. The last thing we did was the flat ceiling all along, and some Frenchmen came and painted it in squares and patterns, black and white. And now we've done it all, and to-morrow we shall have four bishops here to open the church to the people and bless it. Your old Priory at Tewkesbury is in a poor plight, and if ever your Prior there wants men, he'd better give us the work, and we'll put it up strong for him like this; that is what our men can do, for it's the English way of work."[1] So ended the old mason's story, and all the group dispersed.

We may easily imagine how imposing was the scene when that grand church was opened to the people. Good Abbot Serlo had won his way by the greatness of his character and his piety. "Ecclesiæ murus, virtutis gladius, buccina justiciæ," are the words written to his memory by William of Malmesbury. The wealth and work of that good man attracted other good men to him; and among them was one Peter his prior, who

[1] The completed work at Gloucester was dedicated in the year 1100. The rebuilding of the Priory of Tewkesbury was immediately begun, and in 1102 it was used for service and raised to the dignity of an Abbey. The style is very peculiar, and precisely similar to that at Gloucester: whence the idea that the same workmen built it.

succeeded him as abbot, a man of literary and artistic pursuits, who first began a library here, and collected rich mass books, and embroidery, and filled the treasury with valuable things, among which was the famous Gloucester Candlestick, now in the safe custody of the South Kensington Museum, which, with all its grotesqueness of design and ornament, is no mere relic of antique curiosity, but a work of such excellence as, even in these fastidious days, to command our surprise and admiration. It must have been a heart-breaking scene for the good abbot and his art-loving prior to witness, only two years after their dedication festival, their glorious Abbey Church devastated by fire. The great roof and painted ceiling lay smouldering upon the floor. But, as, thank God, in so many human affairs, good comes out of evil, the terror and ruin of those recurrent flames, which sear the history of all such buildings, brought about the use of stone vaulting, which, both for its skill and beauty, became the consummating glory of mediæval genius. After four destructive fires, the first work of Gothic vaulting here, which the monks of the abbey devised and worked at with their own hands, was, however, not an artistic success. They cut and maimed the features of the fine old Norman clerestory, and placed their thin weak work too low, destroying all the original grandeur of effect. If it were just at all to stigmatise the arts of Romanesque or Norman times as grotesque or rude, there was yet about them that breadth and vigour of purpose which are the best elements of grandeur. But here in this first pointed vaulting was a grievous and irreparable injury, destroying all sense of proportion throughout the whole building.

If our subject could be extended to embrace the stirring events of contemporary history, such scenes as these old walls have witnessed, when the last

Saxon Edward trod these aisles, or met his Witan on this very spot; or when the Conqueror William came to Gloucester at Christmas time to hunt the neighbouring forest, or met his Parliament within these very walls; or when the child King Henry the Third was crowned upon those very altar steps; or when in solemn stateliness the murdered Edward was laid beneath those stones—such events as these would afford the opportunities of most picturesque description; for by ancient Chronicles, by illuminated manuscripts, and by inference from similar events well known elsewhere, we could paint those pictures to the life. But our attention here is limited to those arts of ancient days that we see illustrated around us. If then we cast the eyes of our imagination backwards to those wondrous times, marked as they are by the contrasts of intense refinement with intense barbarity, we shall find in the broken record of their arts, such as the great religious houses present either to our memory by their records, or by their relics to our eyes, such works of surpassing beauty, such evidences of exquisite piety, as are enough to cool our pride and engage our deepest sympathies. If we remember how those arts of the middle ages grew in beauty and strength, not by imitation or by rote, but from the womb of creative genius; if we reflect how deep are the sentiments, the sympathy, the aspiration they express, we can trace through their means that unity of motive and action which is the beating of the great heart of humanity from generation to generation; forward to ourselves, whose sense responds to every syllable of their poetry, or backwards, to very ancient days when one who was a poet, a prophet, and a king poured out his heart in such words as these: "I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have prepared onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colours, and all

manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance; and gold for the things of gold, and silver for things of silver"—or to one who followed in such work, and added to it "blue and purple and crimson and fair linen"—or to the ancient seer whose inspired sense of the future glory of Christ's Church broke out in such rhapsody as this: "Oh thou afflicted, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires; I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."

Among the relics of this once great Abbey of St. Peter there are the evidences of such enterprise in art, such record of the devotion of men's lives, their thoughts, their piety, their skill, as are better felt than told. They are their own interpreters. But we might tell of such things as these,—how that some forms of art seem to have sprung up first here, at Gloucester, such as the fan vaulting of the cloisters; and the web of screens, and tracery of a style before its time,[1] that enrich St. Andrew's aisle; or of that master genius of architecture, whose name is among the great unknown, fired by the success and beauty of that work of Abbot Wygmore, and impelled by an enthusiasm, approaching recklessness, that broke through the eastern apse, changing its gloom into a flood of light; and paring down the venerable walls, covered them with a film of tracery, and then threw up a vault of network stone so playful, so light, as seemed to need nothing but the air to carry it. We might still further tell of the qualities of ancient glass, so refractive as to turn it all to jewelry; or of

[1] This so-called aisle is the south transept, which was in great part rebuilt by Abbot Wygmore (1329-1337), and although of the early years of the fourteenth century, it is characterised by the distinctive features of the Perpendicular style, which was evidently initiated by the masons of Gloucester. The same may be said of the earliest fan tracery known, which is in the cloisters, begun by Abbot Horton 1351-1377, *vide* Prof. Willis, *Gent. Mag.*, 1860.

that masterpiece of refined colouring, still traceable among the shreds of ruin, on the reredos of the Lady Chapel; or again, we might praise the successful audacity which poised the great tower in mid-air, and crowned it with embroidery in stone. But all these things are rather for the study of years than for this passing hour. Take, rather, one broad glance at this mighty fabric. Place yourself where you can command the view, or wander in the aisles and see that great work in the completion of its beauty, as it was on the morning of that day, all but three centuries and a half ago, when the Prior met the King's Commissioner and surrendered the Abbey for its dissolution.

How different from what we see it now, denuded of its colour, poor in sculpture, robbed of those important features which made its architectural effect harmonious and complete, and others added which are an injury and a hideous disgrace. Of what it was we know enough by history and by inference to build it up again; but words will not build, and description would fail to bring adequately before you the full effect of what the art and the devotion of centuries had accumulated within its walls. In front of you would rise the great central rood on its loft, approached by stairs in the aisle upon your left; and beneath them the two altars for the people's church, placed right and left against the stone screen which parted it from the choir, each altar with its background of sculptured niches and coloured statuary.

If there is a feature more remarkable than others, even now, it is the multitude of stone screen work about the choir and its aisles and transepts; but in those days we know of at least two more, which must have had imposing effect, at the end of each aisle of the nave; but these and others have been swept away. Raised upon the steps within that choir, who can doubt

what the high altar and its retable must have been, that were the work of that unsurpassed genius who changed the grim old Saxon apse into a wonder of gracefulness and light? Nor less beautiful was its background of aisles and chapels, now alas empty and disused, but then with their apses filled with sculpture and their walls covered with storied painting; and last, not least indeed, that incomparable Lady Chapel, now desolate, but then a wonder of coloured walls and windows, and such a reredos as neither our fancy nor our skill could replace, now a blackened wreck; but then a work of highest art, and of exquisite workmanship in sculpture and in colours, before which we can only stand admiring, grieved, and silent.

Turn then from these materials to the moral of their tale. The Church in those days had its enemies, some just and learned, some ignorant and unjust. Rightly or wrongly (it is not our business here to discuss the faith of Christianity as it then presented itself, whether in the plain guise of its primitive truths or modified in the passage of centuries by all that ignorance, superstition, or the poetry of romance had done to darken or adorn it), the people were content, and they received the recompense of their simple faith. It was to them the light and the solace of their lives in an age of hardship and rough company. How natural, then, their reverence and regard for all that these sacred walls contained, that brought to their faithful eyes the assurance of consolation and support. The altars were their sanctuaries of refuge. The quiet aisles, whose peace was only deepened by the echoes from the world without, were their resting-places. Architecture had embellished them, sculpture had enriched them, and painting, which was then the poor man's literature, had covered them with stories, suggesting thoughts of devotion and peace.

But what are all these arts? Does any estimate of them that we can take exhaust their nature? Whence come they? For what do they exist, if it be not for their power of appeal from man to man? Of what good that lofty choir, if it be but to enclose a vague and useless space; of what good to raise above it that great tower, if it be but to pile up senseless stones; for what good the bulk and body of the great minster itself, if it be but a mass of meaningless masonry? No; but as the spark is that lights the candle, so has the touch of fine art illumined those stones. The hands of their builders are dead, but their art lives; and their heart, their mind, their devotion, their very lives, still animate those monuments.

So ends my story; and the moral of it all is this: The foundation of all fine art lies in that *relationship* which exists between the things of material and the things of spirit; and the degree of its perception and the power of its use is the gauge of all art's genius. By force of that relationship Fine Art testifies to that Divine life which underlies the whole sphere of man's mortal state. She testifies to the utter inadequacy of all material things to measure the range, or to satisfy the aspirations, of that which is itself illimitable—the human soul. She is herself that soul's interpreter. Her greatest works are but symbols. She is conscious of her own feebleness, and of those impenetrable clouds which dim her mortal sight. But she is conscious also of that light which shines beyond those clouds; and by an impulse of desire and faith she stretches out her arms to the heavens, and, silent, she binds around her lovely brow this motto: "What is not seen is eternal."

APPENDIX

THE METHOD OF SPIRIT FRESCO PAINTING

Reprinted from a letter addressed, by request, to the Secretary, Science and Art Department, South Kensington, March 1880.

SPIRIT Fresco Painting is not the mere addition of one more medium to the many already known, but a system, complete from the first preparation of a wall to the last touch of the artist.

The advantages which it ventures to offer are—(1) durability (the principal materials being all but imperishable); (2) power to resist external damp and changes of temperature; (3) luminous effect; (4) a dead surface; (5) freedom from all chemical action on colours.

It is designed mainly for purposes of great works on walls, and to afford to monumental art in this country the advantages peculiar to the various systems of Buon Fresco, tempera, oil, the true encaustic, and water glass, with freedom from those objections to them which are due to the dampness and darkness of our climate.

I am the more glad of the opportunity of sending you a full explanation of the system, because its manifest advantages in rapid drying and dead surface have led to the production of works of considerable importance, which, though professedly in Spirit Fresco, have been executed with too much consideration of time and cost, by the adoption of the Medium, but by neglect of *the System*, on which the whole excellence of the matter depends. Such works, having merely a superficial existence, that is to say, no incorporation with the wall on which they are painted, are liable to perish from want of consistency, and might bring the system into disrepute.

The Wall Surface.

The wall must be dry. No painting materials can be durable on a damp foundation; it is enough to contend with external damp and the atmosphere of crowded places. The surface to be painted must also be perfectly dry and porous, not merely absorbent, but *porous*. The best is good common stucco, precisely the same as that always used for Buon Fresco, of which the proportions of lime and *perfectly washed* gritty sand vary according to the nature of the lime and the time given to slake it. For important works the lime was formerly run and kept closed from the atmosphere for above a year, in which case the proportions would be one of lime to two of perfectly clean grit. Lime imperfectly slaked will blister and blow off. For a great work this must be purposely prepared; but for ordinary work the common plaster (stucco), viz. one of lime to three of clean grit, in the interior of buildings *carefully executed*, may be trusted. The one primary necessity is that it should be left with its natural surface, *its porous quality* being absolutely essential. All smoothing process or "floating" with plaster of Paris destroys this quality. All cements must be avoided, some of them having too hard and smooth a surface, and consequently being devoid of all key or means of attachment for colours, and others being liable to efflorescence and chemical action. The next best surface, after that of stucco on a wall of good dry brick, is that of coarse and porous Bath stone, or any other free stone with that essential quality; all sand-papering or other process being objectionable from its filling the pores of the stone with powder.

The Medium and Preparation of Colours.

Take, in any multiple of these proportions, according to the quantity required for a work:—

Elemi resin (*Gum elemi*)	2 oz.	weight.
Pure white wax	4 oz.	weight.
Oil of spike lavender	8 oz.	liquid measure.
Finest preparation of artist's copal	20 oz.	liquid measure.

(If a stronger kind of copal is used 18 ounces are sufficient.)

With these materials, incorporated by heat, all colours, in *dry powder*, must be mixed, and the most convenient system

is to do so precisely as oil colours are mixed on a slab, and put into tubes. The colours keep in this way for many years. I have many in tubes above twenty years old, as fresh as when put there.

The proper method of compounding this medium is this. Take 2 oz. of Elemi resin, and melt them in 2 ounces of rectified turpentine in a small pot or saucepan over the charcoal, and strain when quite liquid through muslin (to clear it of pieces of leaves and bark) into the larger pot. Into this put 4 oz. of white wax in small pieces, and melt with the Elemi. When melted, add 20 oz. of copal, and boil all together to a white foam, stirring well with a spoon reaching to the bottom, remove from the fire and boil again. Immediately upon the last removal from the fire add 8 oz. of spike oil, stirring all well together. This volatile ingredient would be wasted if added sooner and boiled.

N.B.—It is necessary to be extremely careful lest any spark from the charcoal (no flame being allowed) should ignite the liquid, every ingredient being inflammable. It should be done out of doors.

Decant through a funnel into strong *clear glass* bottles, that the condition of the medium may be clearly visible before use, the quart size being the most convenient; and leave uncorked to cool. When used, the bottles may require shaking, not that the materials will ever again disintegrate, but from the weight of the wax they will tend to thicken at the bottom.

Preparation of the Wall Surface.

Choose a time of dry and warm weather.

Dilute the amount of medium required in *once and a half its bulk* of good turpentine. The mixture is more effective if compounded by heat, which is very easily done in a large iron cauldron over charcoal free from flame; and the "Wall Wash" thus made can be kept for any time in large bottles. (If kept in *tins* for any length of time its condition for use would be hidden.) With this wash let the surface of the wall be well saturated, the liquid being dashed against it rather than merely washed over it. After two days' interval this must be repeated. After a few days left for evaporation, mix equal quantities of pure white lead (in powder) and of gilder's whitening (common whitening being often full of large grits

and too strong of lime) in the medium *slightly* diluted with about a third of turpentine, and paint the surface thickly, and when sufficiently evaporated to bear a second coat, add it as thickly as a brush can lay it. This, when dry, for which two or three weeks may be required, produces a perfect surface—so white that colours upon it have all the internal light of Buon Fresco and the transparency of pure water colours, and it is so absorbent that their attachment is complete.

Method of Painting.

Paint boldly and simply as in Buon Fresco; as much as possible *alla prima*, and with much body; and use pure oil of spike in your dipper freely. Decision is very necessary, because by much harassing the surface, the materials are liable to be disintegrated, the resins rise to the surface and perfect deadness is lost. If the surface has been left for so long as to have become quite hard, wash over the part for the morning's work with pure spike oil, to melt the surface (hence the name Spirit *Fresco*) and prepare it to incorporate the colours painted *into* it. If any part requires second painting the next day, do *not* wash again with the spike oil, it is liable to bring the resins to the surface, but use plenty of spike oil, which renders the surface moist (Fresco) to be painted into. Paint rather solidly than transparently. Transparent glazing is less likely to dry dead than colours used with white lead.

The Rationale of the painting is therefore this, that the colours in powder being incorporated with material identical with that which has already sunk deep into the pores of the wall surface, and has hardened there by the evaporation of the spirit vehicle, may be regarded as belonging to the mass of the wall itself, and not as mere superficial applications. This result is produced by the spike oil being the one common solvent of all the materials, which turpentine is not; the moment the painter's brush touches the surface it opens to receive the colours, and on the rapid evaporation of the spike oil it closes them in, and thus the work is done.

Important Cautions.

Take care that the spike oil or turpentine does not run down, or by any carelessness be sprinkled on any finished work. It produces a shine by bringing up the resins, and is indelible, except by solid over-painting.

Very clean habits are necessary, for every ingredient is so sticky that unless the brushes, palette, etc. etc., are thoroughly cleaned with turpentine at the close of every day's work the result is great discomfort.

Let all preparation of the surface and rubbing up of the colours for tubes be overlooked by the artist, as in old days when the technical work was done in the artist's own "bottega." A thoroughly respectable colourman interested in serving the artist may be trusted, but the colourman's *man* (somewhere else) most certainly is not. The colours dry so rapidly while he is rubbing them up on the slab, that he is tempted to dilute them with turpentine, and thus destroy their power and consistency, which the use of pure medium alone ensures.

Result.

All this sounds very complicated and troublesome in description, but in practice, when once "*en train*," it is perfectly simple and easy. I do not pretend that it is a cheap method, or free from all trouble, but that trouble is as nothing in comparison with Buon Fresco Painting and several other methods.

If this system is really what, after more than twenty years' work in it, I have confidence that it is, it is worth that little trouble (only felt when first beginning) by an artist who desires to ensure the durability of his work. It is for this that the adoption of *entire system is absolutely essential.*

With all the many and manifest faults of amateur work, my own paintings executed over the chancel arch of Highnam Church in 1860-61, the procession in the aisle of that church begun in 1868, and the work in St. Andrew's Chapel in Gloucester Cathedral, finished in 1867, simply regarded as tests, afford for all practical purposes of wall painting every quality that a fresco painter, under the exigencies of English climate and darkness, can require. I only quote my own works because I know that in them *every condition has been followed.* Their surfaces are hard and smooth. The rapidity of drying prevents any stickiness, and the surface becomes immediately compact, but it requires a year or two at least for its perfect induration by the complete evaporation of the volatile oils.

Another Method for Wood or Canvas.

As a system of painting for *large works* of *high class* other than upon walls, where dead surface and durability are desiderata, I venture to add that for large wooden panels or extensive areas of wooden ceilings I have found, after many experiments, the following most pleasant in use and perfectly successful in result :—

Take *one* part, *in bulk*, pale drying oil,
ditto, ditto, strong copal varnish,
two ditto, japanner's gold size,
two ditto, turpentine,

have them thoroughly shaken together, and always strongly shaken before use. In this (which, by way of specifying it, I have called the Ely medium) have all dry powder colours rubbed up and put into tubes, or, if quantity is wanted, into pots kept covered against dust and evaporation. Paint according to habit or circumstance, transparently as in water-colour or massively as in oil. Use as vehicle in the dipper a compound of three parts turpentine and one part medium. It dries with such rapidity that outline under-painting and final effect may follow immediately on each other. It is very pleasant and easy of use. It dries perfectly dead and hard as iron. Ordinary decorators often use japanner's gold size alone, because of its dead surface, but it is useless alone, having no consistency nor any binding power to preserve colours. This Ely medium is exceedingly dark in colour, but it produces no appreciable effect on the powder colours that are rubbed up in it, not even white. If any effect at all, it is that of a slight mellowness. With this the whole of the eastern half of the nave roof, the whole lantern and octagon, and the baptistery transept ceiling at Ely Cathedral were painted, the former as long ago as 1863-64.

THE END

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